

SIGHT AND SOUND

SUMMER 1943

VOL 12 NO 45

ARTICLES: THE FILM IN SWEDEN
USING THE FILM STRIP
AMERICAN LETTER
DEVELOPMENTS IN EIRE

CONTRIBUTORS: Herman Weinberg
Rodney Ackland
Arthur Elton
Elizabeth Cross
Evelyn Russell

6^{D.}

PUBLISHED BY
THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1



CINEMA EQUIPMENT

The BTH Company is one of the world's leading electrical manufacturing firms and has been prominent in the development and manufacture of all kinds of electric plant and equipment, from the largest turbo-alternator to the smallest motor, and including:—

SOUND REPRODUCER EQUIPMENTS

PROJECTORS

LANTERNS

RECTIFIERS

STAGE AMPLIFICATION EQUIPMENT

**AUDITORIUM AND ARCHITECTURAL
LIGHTING**

**MAZDA LAMPS AND MAZDALUX
LIGHTING EQUIPMENT**

• •

BTH

THE BRITISH THOMSON-HOUSTON CO., LTD.
CROWN HOUSE, ALDWYCH, LONDON, W.C.2.

A3312 N

or

SOUND EQUIPMENT LTD., 123, Widmore Road, Bromley, Kent.

Sight and Sound

VOLUME 12 NO 45

SUMMER 1943

- | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|
| THE FILM IN SWEDEN: By T. Linder | 2 | THE QUARTER'S FILMS: By Evelyn Russell | 16 |
| LETTER FROM NEW YORK: By Herman G. Weinberg | 5 | USING THE FILM STRIP: Some practical advice by A. Arkinstall, headmaster of Callowland Junior Boys' School, Watford | 19 |
| THE BUBBLE—REPUTATION: By Rodney Ackland, who also directed the new film <i>Thursday's Child</i> | 8 | CHILDREN'S CINEMA CLUBS: A note on the new National Cinema Clubs for Boys and Girls. Contributed by Odeon Theatres Ltd. | 21 |
| WILLIAM HUNTER: An appreciation by Arthur Elton | 11 | IT WON'T LAST FOR EVER: By Elizabeth Cross | 22 |
| DEVELOPMENTS IN EIRE: By Liam O Laoghaire, the Hon. Sec. of the Irish Film Society | 12 | NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES | 24 |
| ESSEX MOBILE TEACHING FILMS: By B. E. Lawrence, Chief Education Officer of Essex | 14 | | |

FILM LIBRARY

NONE LARGER OR BETTER
Complete List Post Free

Our recently enlarged Film Library affords the Home Cine enthusiast, also Education Authorities, Civil Defence Organisations, etc., an unexcelled selection in 8 mm., 9.5 mm., 16 mm Silent Films.

The Classification embraces:

DOCUMENTARY. Travel and Geographical, Industrial, Popular Science, Agriculture, Nature, Sports, Hunting and Fishing, History, Hygiene, A.R.P. and First Aid, Miscellaneous Features.

COMEDY. Charlie Chaplin, Laurel & Hardy, Our Gang, Collegians, Juvenile Comedy, etc., etc.

DRAMA. Full length Features, Western, and Short Dramas.

CARTOONS.

This Library embraces hundreds and hundreds of Subjects, many of which comprise several reels, and all Films are in splendid condition.

SEND FOR LIST AND TERMS

stating the Make, Model, and No. (if possible) of your Projector, also whether 8mm., 9.5mm., or 16mm.

R. W. PROFFITT LTD.

49-51 Knowsley St., BOLTON.

'Phone: BOLTON 4422.

DARTINGTON HALL FILM UNIT

TOTNES :: :: DEVON

Three New Silent Productions

Bacon

Fall of the Year

Hawkmoor Nurse

*Producers of 16 mm. Educational
Films since 1934. Full Lists on request.*

The Film in Sweden.

by T. Linder of Stockholm

LAST YEAR turned out to be a record year in the Swedish film world. According to official statistics, 13,074,000 cinema tickets were sold in Stockholm alone. This means that nearly nine tickets were bought by every single individual of the whole population in Sweden, while exact statistics for the Capital show that 21.2 tickets were sold to every Stockholmer.

Swedish filmgoers have always been very interested in foreign films and the repertory of the Swedish cinemas is as varied and international as anyone could desire. All foreign films are shown in their original versions with Swedish sub-titles superimposed at the foot of the screen. As many Swedes know English, French and German fairly well, they are able to follow the spoken dialogue (at least with the help of the subtitles), but even those who do not know foreign languages enjoy foreign films this way. In spite of war-time difficulties, the supply of foreign films is still very satisfactory, as may be seen from the following schedule.

Feature Films released in Sweden

Country of origin	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942
Great Britain	16	19	21	14	21
France	42	56	34	8	7
Germany (incl. Austria)	27	17	24	37	28
U.S.A.	191	208	170	186	158
Sweden	28	30	36	34	34
Other countries	18	12	18	20	17
Total number	322	342	303	299	265

The outstanding French pre-war films by such directors as Julien Duvivier, Marcel Carné, Jean Renoir and Marc Allegret were extremely popular in Sweden, and their dis-

appearance was a serious loss to the Swedish cinemas. They offered stiff competition to the American super-films and were financially quite as successful. They were intensely appreciated by the fastidious as well as by the general filmgoer, and they deeply influenced Swedish taste, awakening a new interest in psychological films, which ultimately opened new ways for Swedish film production. Some Austrian films enjoyed an equal popularity, but it can hardly be said that German films have been very much in vogue with the Swedish public. On the whole it seems that Swedish audiences are ready to accept films if they are really good; irrespective of their origin. A new quality in British films was revealed in 1939 by *French Without Tears*, *Q Planes* and *The Lady Vanishes*, which were all very popular. Since then all British films have been very well received, particularly *Pygmalion*, *Night Train to Munich*, and *The Girl in the News*, as well as the big films produced in Great Britain by American companies. *49th Parallel* and *Pimpernel Smith* have not been shown in Sweden, as the Swedish censors have to reject films that might disturb Sweden's friendly relations with foreign countries. *In Which We Serve*, however, was released here on March 1st and was enthusiastically received by critics and audience alike, and a re-release of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* proved as successful as a new film of high quality.

The considerable decrease in the number of American films imported during the last few years is due to transportation difficulties, but only its smaller second features have dis-

appeared, and as many of the big America films have been very successful recently, it may be safely assumed that the total volume of business attained by the American film companies in Sweden is as big as ever—they have helped to fill the gap left by the French films. The success of *Gone With the Wind* equalled the best expectations: out of Stockholm's 616,000 inhabitants, 350,000 have already seen the film at advanced prices, and the number will be substantially increased when the film returns at ordinary prices this autumn. The success of *Waterloo Bridge* with Vivien Leigh and Robert Taylor is quite astounding. This sentimental war story has beaten so many attendance records that it must be rated as one of the most successful films ever shown in Sweden—at the beginning of March, the film is still running in a second-run cinema in Stockholm and has reached its 63rd week. Chances are, however that its record will be beaten by *Mrs. Miniver*, which is now showing for the 15th week at the Première cinema to capacity houses and is regarded here as one of the best films ever seen.

The Censorship

Swedish censors have always had to reject films which might disturb Sweden's relations with foreign countries—it is no particular wartime stipulation—but though the number of films so rejected has increased in recent years, it remains relatively small. This is the only restriction on the importation of foreign films into Sweden.

So far the Swedish state has done nothing to help the production of Swedish films either financially or artistically. In spite of this, the number of feature films produced is quite remarkable, and their share of the total amount of film rentals in Sweden is considerable, as evidenced by the following official figures:

Percentage of the total amount of film rentals coming from Swedish films:

1938	37.4%	1939	37.2%
1940	42.9%	1941	43.4%

The percentage during last year is not officially known, but it seems safe that there has been some further increase. Before the war the production cost of a Swedish film ranged somewhere between £9,000 and £14,000, but at present it is somewhere between £11,000 and £16,000, owing to rising costs and added production values. The average amount of money in net rentals from a Swedish film is estimated at £15,000, the average studio shooting time is four weeks with a varying measure of time spent on location shots, and the average length is 9,000 feet. When judging the quality of the Swedish films, it must be remembered that they are all financially planned only for the home market, and salaries to actors, writers, and directors are consequently not as high as they are in larger countries; thus the Swedish producer gets more for his money than a foreigner would expect.

New type of Swedish film

Earlier, the majority of the Swedish films were built around popular comedians, and there was a rather moderate percentage of prestige films, but 1939 brought a noticeable change both as regards quantity and quality. It should be noted that this change came before the outbreak of the war and has numerous complex causes. It seems that the generation that has been growing up with the films was just coming of age and yielded quite a number of talented actors, writers, directors, and producers. At the same time Swedish producers were becoming aware that new and bold steps would have to be taken. Particularly remarkable was the success achieved by the film *A Crime* from the play by Sigfrid Siwertz.

This stark psychological drama of the degeneration of a family was directed by Anders Henriksson under

the influence of the great French films, and, to the surprise of experienced box-office prophets, this depressing but artistic film was extremely successful, beating even the most popular comedies. This made producers realise that there was a big demand for serious Swedish films, too, and later years have brought a gratifying number of interesting Swedish films. A considerable number of films have been built on well-known novels, and authors have begun to write scripts directly for the screen and collaborate with directors and scenarists to bring forth films with intellectual and artistic merits.

The period after the last war brought many Swedish films that were justly appreciated all over the world; this time has been regarded as the golden age of the Swedish cinema and it seems that it has again reached a period of maturity, although present conditions do not make it possible to win world recognition for the new films. Space does not permit any characterisation of prominent Swedish directors or exhaustive description of the many interesting films, so the following lines about some recent films will have to give the reader some idea of the wide variety of subjects being treated in Swedish films of to-day.

Some new titles

General von Döbeln is an historical film about a famous Swedish general from the wars against Napoleon and was made from the play by Sven Stolpe who also adapted it for the screen. Edwin Adolphson gives a superb performance in the title-rôle, and the Danish actor Poul Reumert plays General Bernadotte, who became King of Sweden. *Doctor Glas* is the film version of a classical book by Hjalmar Söderberg, a sensitive and artistic story about an intellectual doctor who ventures into the field of action to poison the loathsome husband of a young and unhappy woman. *Ride*

To-night! was made from the historical novel by Vilhelm Moberg. Gustaf Molander's forceful direction brings out the inspiring message of this best-seller about some free farmers, fighting for their freedom and independence against a domineering foreign nobleman. Lars Hanson, known from some silent Hollywood films, appears as the unfortunate man who tries to evade the struggle by making concessions.

The Struggle Goes On returns Victor Sjöström to the screen as a medical professor in charge of a large hospital and gives fascinating glimpses of the lives of some doctors and nurses. *The Feudists* was written directly for the screen by one of Sweden's leading dramatists, Carl-Ragnar Gierow, who made a chapter out of Swedish history into a lusty screen adventure with plenty of action and humour, much in the spirit of the films from the American West. *Can the Doctor Come?* is a fictional film of a strongly documentary character, describing the work of a doctor in the wilds of Lapland. It is largely composed of scenes shot on location and contains many moving and exciting episodes. *A Play About the Road to Heaven* is a most interesting film, made from a new play on the lines of *The Green Pastures*. It shows a young farmer from Dalecaria who wanders through the well-known scenes of the Biblical history—he is on his way to God in order to reclaim his bride who has been burnt as a witch. In many respects this story recalls the many novels by the late Selma Lagerlöf which resulted in the famous Swedish films from the early twenties. Thus the Swedish cinema has again returned to a source of inspiration that once made it great and critics agree that the new film is equal to its predecessors.

The rising interest in Swedish films as part of the national culture has finally led the Government to appoint a commission of experts who have had to investigate the means by which the

State might assist Swedish film production. The official report states that the Swedish film industry is financially sound and the number of films produced is quite satisfactory; hence there is no need for subsidies, protection from foreign competition or other such means.

On the other hand the experts suggest that a Film Board should be appointed, consisting of five members, who would have at their disposal half a million Swedish crowns (about £27,500) every year. A producer who is planning an unusually costly film or a film that breaks new ground artistically and consequently involves great financial

risks, owing to the limited Swedish market, should then submit his plans to the Board, and provided that the prospective film seems to become unusually valuable from a national or artistic point of view, the Board should provide up to 30 per cent of the production cost. The sum would have to be refunded in case the film is successful, and the help would thus take the form of a kind of insurance against the great financial risks involved. This plan has met with great interest from all parties concerned, and it is now up to the Riksdag to decide if this interesting experiment will have to be put into practice.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK

BY HERMAN G. WEINBERG

PARADOXICALLY enough, one of the least well-done films of the past quarter provided a higher degree of interest than many of its slicker competitors. *The Cat People*, haunted by the insomniacal legend of the Mamelukes who were driven out of medieval Serbia by King John, pits the still dormant and restless evil spirit of their descendants against the Christian ethos. The oppressiveness with which these people are burdened is said to have derived from their spiritual affinity with cats, the only domestic animal that has never lost its jungle instincts. The film symbolises this obsession in the persons of a magnificent black panther who paces sullenly around his cage in a zoo and the equally feline Simone Simon who is drawn by an irresistible impulse again and again to that most majestic of all cats. There are startling scenes, such as the wedding feast interrupted by the women (with the most feline face I

have ever seen) calling Simone "Sister" (in Serbian); the lonely walk through the park in which a woman's hysteria increases with every step; the indoor swimming pool episode that the Dreyer who made *The Case of David Grey* would have envied as an excursion into the occult; the kiss that galvanises Simone's face into a bitter smile of neurotic sensuality and which results in violence and death. . . . The odd thing is that these sulphurous goings-on take place in, of all places, New York, and that this hell-scarred little film study in demonology should have been made at all by a Hollywood usually afraid of its own shadow. But there you are—and it is exasperating that there was not a more ferocious script to make the most of the opportunities here offered for a film far off the beaten track.

The Palm Beach Story simply will not do from the director of *The Lady Eve* and we hope Preston Sturges will

redeem himself with *Miracle at Morgan's Creek*. *Shadow of Doubt* will do, though, from Hitchcock, even if Joseph Cotten is hardly convincing as a dispatcher of silly old dowagers with more money than they know what to do with. The ingredients—a gentle murderer of parasitic women, the “Merry Widow” waltz, a sleepy American middle-west town, and the rising suspicion of Teresa Wright that her good uncle is a killer, crowned by the really shocking train episode—mix well in Thornton Wilder’s intelligent script and in Hitchcock’s mesmeric hands which, I am sure, could hypnotise one without meaning to.

Arabian Nights

There is, however, no spell of enchantment over *Arabian Nights*, which, after the charm and witchery of *The Thief of Bagdad* and the sardonic humour of Ufa’s *Secrets of the Orient*, would give it a reason for existence. It is probably the stupidest film ever to be derived from those gorgeous and extravagant tales. *Star Spangled Rhythm* is far better, by comparison, being a musical extravaganza in Hollywood’s most opulent style. Yet were it not for the mischievous playing of Betty Hutton, the first actual example of that anomaly, a comedienne, and a scene in which a pair of “good samaritans” try to help her climb over a ten-foot wall, it would be a great, big beautiful bore, despite the genial presence of Victor Moore and occasional satirical flashes of studio life in Hollywood. Pure surrealism, the wall scene would make even Salvador Dali writhe with envy not to have thought of it first. It is indescribably funny.

The new batch of war films include *Hitler’s Children*, from Gregor Ziehmer’s “Education for Death”, with one terrible scene, the operating room of a Nazi hospital where the anaesthetised bodies of women, judged unfit by the State, are silently wheeled in to be sterilised against their will. If the

terror invoked by this scene had pervaded the rest of the film, this might have been a film to wake some Americans to the realisation of the monstrosity of our enemy.

War Films

Journey for Margaret, in its quiet way, is far more effective as an anti-Nazi film than the noisier and more pretentious *Air Force*. Sensitively written and played, I found it the most touching American film yet to come out of the war. I suppose, in the last analysis, the story is the thing. William L. White had something to say and Dudley Nichols, the author of *Air Force* had nothing. He merely provided the director with a smoothly flowing continuity upon which to string along an eye-dazzling succession of aerial pyrotechnics, and stunningly photographed they are, too, if that’s enough for you.

Bob Hope’s new comedy, *They Got Me Covered*, is perhaps the unfunniest of all his comedies to date, which is a shame as he can be very droll, as witness last season’s *Road to Morocco*. After the hosannahs of praise heaped upon *In Which We Serve*, the critical boys and girls of New York reclaimed their garlands and tossed them again at Saroyan’s *The Human Comedy*, which two films would seem to be their choice this season as to what films should be like. I found *The Human Comedy* a sort of super-revivalist meeting at which even the audience at one point is urged to join in the singing of a hand clapping, foot stamping religious hymn. I submit, what has this to do with cinema? *Random Harvest* will please those who liked *Mrs. Miniver*, and their number seems to be legion here, as attested by its enormous success; and the new Dietrich film *Pittsburgh*, is another waste of her genuine talents as a screen *femme fatale*. Galatea has, indeed, lost her Pygmalion—von Sternberg—and more’s the pity.

The new Disney, *Saludos Amigos*, is a fragrant bouquet tossed at our South

American neighbours, and it makes me feel that Disney should be on the diplomatic staff as our official ambassador of goodwill to the world at large, beginning right now. Oddly enough, the style of presentation here derives from Vertov's *Man With the Camera*, unconsciously, of course, and Disney would be surprised to be told *that*, I'm sure.

Mexican Film-making

As you have, no doubt, seen the new Russian documentaries, what remains is Mexico's bid for film fame on Broadway, to fill in the gap temporarily left by the lack of new French films. *Silk, Blood and Sun* (a title that Ibanez would have liked) is about bull fighting, a "sport" that Ibanez reviled in his memorable "Blood and Sand" and which Constanca de la Mora, "La Passionara" of the Spanish Civil War, called "the Moorish backwash of death and futility". The Mexican comedian, Cantinflas, is much more palatable in a short film, *The Boxer*, and another, *The Bullfighter*. These are simple, Chaplinesque, and not without an indigenous low humour. Chaplin and Disney have both been taken with the art of this new clown and if he is not yet a Grock or Fratellini he is well on the way. His full length films are said to be quite amusing, the parody of bull fighting, *Neither Blood nor Sand*, and the satire on the incredible D'Artagnan legend, *The Three Musketeers*. As for the rest, Mexico appears indeed to be having a film "renaissance", if the news that Laurel and Hardy are going there to do *Don Quixote* and Erich von Stroheim to write, direct and star in an as yet unnamed story, is true. Meanwhile, von Stroheim is completing a cycle in Hollywood by again playing, as he did in World War I, German officers (whom none understand so well as he), an Austrian who despises the German military caste and its malignant outgrowth, Nazism.

He will play Marshal Rommel in *Five Graves to Cairo* and a Nazi physician in Lilian Hellman's original story of Russia at war, *North Star*, which Lewis Milestone is directing. Until von Stroheim himself is given an anti-Nazi film to direct (preferably from a scenario of his own), we will have to be satisfied with the best his disciples and colleagues can do. With the possible exception of what the Russians may some day do on this theme, nothing less than the fury of von Stroheim to delineate, Daumier-like, the Nazi psyche, will do, in the last analysis.

Films to come

Lubitsch has completed *Heaven Can Wait*, seven stages in the life of a man, from the Hungarian of Bus-Fekete; Fritz Lang has completed *Hangmen Also Die*, dealing with the Nazi killer, Heydrich; King Vidor is still at work on his vast canvas of American life to be called *America*; and Disney has completed Seversky's *Victory Through Air Power*. Disney, in collaboration with the anthropologist, Earnest Hooton, of Harvard University, is also doing a cartoon-film that will debunk "aryanism" and the Nazi myth of "race superiority". George Pal, the Dutch creator of charming film puppets, has completed *Brave Mr. Strauss*, in which the waltz king leads the invading Nazi army with his violin like a pied-piper, through Vienna to drown in the Danube. Two of the new season's most ambitious productions will be Franz Werfel's miracle story, *The Song of Bernadette*, and that old war-horse, *Quo Vadis?* Two other ambitious films, *The Outlaw* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, have had their releases delayed, the former because of censor difficulty, the latter because of objections from the Franco government, of all people!

New York,

March
1943.

The Bubble-Reputation

By Rodney Ackland, *who directed*
Thursday's Child

IT IS generally conceded nowadays that with *Citizen Kane* and the *Magnificent Ambersons*, the cinema is worthy of adult attention, has, in fact and at last, grown up. There has even been a leader about it in *The Times*!

This time it is Orson Welles who has brought about the sudden metamorphosis. Before that it was René Clair. Before him it was Eisenstein and Pudovkin. Before them it was Chaplin with a *Woman of Paris* and before that *Caligari*. With every new impact of a fresh creative mind on the cinema earnest British filmgoers and critics go into a whirl of excitement and forget everything they have seen on the screen before.

Today the impression is, that if you have seen *Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and the latest Donald Duck, your education in screen-art is complete. True, a handful of "cinéastes", to use a nostalgic term, do still remember that the cinema was an art in the days of *Sous les Toits*, or perhaps they remember *The Last Laugh* or *Potemkin*, or even as far back as *Caligari*, but on the whole the public regard each significant new work as an isolated phenomenon.

Griffith the Great

They had never seen ceilings before *Citizen Kane*, although ceilings had been in pictures for years, and in the same way they had never seen *montage* before *Potemkin*, although Griffith had conceived it years before without giving it a French name, and they had never seen panning or tracking cam-

eras before *The Last Laugh*, although Griffith had been panning and tracking his camera with superb effect all over the set since 1915. And so we come back to the *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*; back in fact to the days when cinema did indeed become an art, And that is the one thing that not even a bare handful of earnest cinema-goers and film critics remember. In serious discussion of films Griffith is never mentioned, his pictures are never shown by Film Societies (with the exception of two isolated private performances at the Forum in 1939 through the enterprise of the British Film Institute, London Branch), Cavalcanti's *Film and Reality* shows no example of his work, modern textbooks on the cinema refer to it cursorily if at all.

In short, the man and his work and his influence are as forgotten as last week's fan magazine. That is, in this country.

The U.S. remembers

In America, it is different, There, Griffith is acknowledged as the supreme master of the cinema, the creator of its art-form and of every technical device known to cinema direction; his major works are continually on show at universities, colleges and film societies; he has been more written about than any film-artist since Chaplin, the most important text-book on the cinema to date—Lewis Jacob's "The Rise of the American Film"—devotes more space to him than to any other single direc-

tor, and the frontispiece to "The Film as Art", the Museum of Modern Art's recently published bibliography, is not a still from *Sous les Toits* or *Potemkin* or *Caligari* but from David Wark Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. The Spring of 1940 saw the twenty-fifth anniversary of the première of this film. Gala performances of it were arranged in New York and Chicago and its director received a telegram which concluded, "We deem it a privilege to pay tribute even in this inadequate fashion to the mighty creative vision that resulted in the screen's first great masterpiece. The significance of your accomplishment deepens with time." It was signed by the foremost of America's critics and film historians.

Why?

What is the reason, then, for the extraordinary discrepancy between England's and America's valuation of the director whom Eisenstein called the "great old man of us all"? First and foremost, there is the fact that except for the primitive one-reel Biograph in the Film Institute library there are no copies of Griffith films in this country.

Up to a couple of years before the war, the sound version of *The Birth of a Nation* had not yet been junked and very occasionally cropped up at film societies or the Forum; but as it was the most disgraceful example of vandalism in the history of the screen, only equalled by the sound version of *Joyless Street*, it would have been better for Griffith's reputation to have left it in the vaults. Cut from three hours running time down to an hour and forty-eight minutes, abominably duped, and projected at talkie speed, it gave as much impression of the film's power and greatness as one would get of the greatness of a Beethoven symphony from a recording of which half the records were smashed and the re-

mainder scratched and played with a rusty needle and the speed regulator full out.

But these are only the surface reasons for Griffith's lack of reputation in this country. To get to the root of the matter we have to go back to the late twenties, the period of his decline. Those were the days of red-hot mommas and black bottoms, of flaming youths and dancing daughters. Griffith was out of fashion. *Isn't Life Wonderful*, his beautiful and terrible study of love and starvation in post-war Germany, flopped badly at the box office. He lost his independence and was forced to become a hack director with Paramount for whom he tried pathetically to turn out the sort of films the roaring twenties wanted which weren't in any way up his street. For over ten years he had been the undisputed "Wizard of the Cinema", the "World's Greatest Director", the "Shakespeare of the Screen", but now came the swing of the pendulum, and press and public on both sides of the Atlantic snatched back his laurels and distinctions to distribute them among younger men who had learned everything they knew from Griffith.

Out of Fashion

An extravagant and anomalous situation arose. While serious film enthusiasts prostrated themselves before Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Von Stroheim, holding the name of Griffith up to ridicule, the great Russians themselves humbly acknowledged him their master, and *Intolerance* was still being toured throughout the U.S.S.R. under the sponsorship of Lenin himself. Von Stroheim also openly acknowledged his admiration of Griffith's genius and his debt to him, but the cinéastes either didn't hear or didn't want to though it should have been apparent to them that the Stroheim style was based on a close study of Griffith and, truth to tell, lacked the superb momentum

and rhythm of the older director's work, in spite of an unaccustomed realism (in the Zola sense) of *Greed* and *Foolish Wives*.

But Von Stroheim had two great advantages over Griffith in the eyes of the intelligentsia, his German name and the fact that where the American would locate a love scene on a riverbank or in a cornfield, the European preferred the background of a sewer. In addition to being neither German nor Russian there were other reasons for the prejudice against Griffith. He preached Love instead of Communism. He wrote flowery sub-titles. He had directed a melodrama called *Way Down East*, which had taken a great deal of money. He had been a popular success. The prejudice was so deep-seated and bigoted that it seemed to cause attacks of blindness and deafness where anything to do with Griffith was concerned. How else explain the failure to recognise *Intolerance* for what it was, a staggering experiment in rhythmic and symphonic montage, not only a social document but the work of a film poet, unparalleled for breadth of vision and nobility of design?

Way Down East

Way Down East was the film most responsible for the misunderstanding of Griffith's value as a creative artist. Through it his name became associated with melodramatic claptrap and sentimentality, with foreclosed mortgages and heroines thrown out into storms, with Eliza crossing the ice-floes and *East Lynne*. A reference to this film can still provoke a snigger in film circles, for it has been forgotten that what Griffith actually did was to take a creaking old Victorian melodrama without in any way altering plot, characters or situations and so transmute it with his cinematic genius that it became one of the greatest of all money-making successes, as well as a

film of which a cinema-despising critic like Agate could write:

"*Way Down East* does not contain one ounce of sentimentality. He (Griffith) has that which allows you to dwell upon things intrinsically beautiful so that the mind has time to impregnate itself with beauty and attain to that disposition in which cold substantial facts begin to glow with warm insubstantial meaning . . . proportion and rhythm must have gone to the making of this film as surely as to a volume of Proust."

Unmentioned

In the early thirties when the first books on the history and aesthetics of the cinema began to appear, English writers were practically unanimous in ignoring or belittling the man who had created the art of the screen. William Hunter in his "Scrutiny of Cinema" had apparently never heard of him, though he devoted pages to critical analysis of a minor artist like René Clair. Rotha in his "The Film Till Now" dismisses *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* as of no value to the cinema and worthy candidates for oblivion. In "Plan for Cinema" Dallas Bower states that the Russian based their technique on "*Westerns!*" And yet he surely must have read Pudovkin's "Film Technique" with all its wealth of reference to Griffith.

In short the English film intelligentsia wouldn't have Griffith at any price; he had been branded as a sentimentalist, and for an intellectual to admit such a person worthy of serious consideration was more shaming than to confess a leaning towards necrophilism. And it is this attitude (persisting almost undiminished, combined with the fact that there has been no opportunity to re-assess his work, which has resulted in the total ignorance of Griffith's importance to the cinema amongst present-day British film students. In New York *Intolerance*

was revived in 1936. Richard Watts, jun., of the *New York Herald Tribune*, called it "a timeless masterpiece"; Seymour Stern of *Experimental Cinema* wrote, "this monumental work, the supreme masterpiece of the American screen." Since then the availability of Griffith's work for re-examination through the Museum of Modern Art has broken down the old prejudices and in America's critical estimation he is back on the pinnacle where he belongs.

U.S. Opinion Revised

In 1940, the Museum published a slim volume, "D. W. Griffith, American Film Master," by Iris Barry, the curator of the Film Library. In it she refers to *Isn't Life Wonderful* as a little masterpiece. But in her book, "Let's go to the Pictures," published in England in 1926 when the reaction against Griffith was at its height she described the same film as bad and boring. So wholesale a revision of critical opinion sums up the argument of this essay. Iris Barry concludes her book on Griffith with the words, "The American public which for 45 years has so keenly enjoyed and supported the motion picture has been somewhat reluctant to allow to it the status of an art. Now gradually they, too, are realising that in Griffith they have one of the greatest and most original artists of our time."

The British public will never come to a similar realisation until the great Griffith films are made available for film societies over here. If the Museum of Modern Art would allow the British Film Institute to have copies of these pictures they would be doing an indispensable service and providing a sounder basis for true film appreciation and understanding. It will then be possible for film students to see the work of Welles and Disney, Ford and Eisenstein, not as isolated phenomena but in relation to the fundamental principles of film art laid down and established for all time by D. W. Griffith nearly thirty years ago.

William Hunter

I FIRST met William Hunter about eight years ago. He came to see me because he wanted help in putting sound on to a teaching film which he had made about Derbyshire. After a few minutes it was evident that Hunter was devoted to films with a single-minded enthusiasm.

By profession, he was a teacher at Dartington Hall, and in the first place he became interested in films as a useful method of teaching. Many people have done this before, but few people have turned their interest into enthusiasm, and their enthusiasm into action; that is, few people have made films as well as talking about them. Hunter's approach was an educational one and he never deviated into the more romantic films paths which might have attracted another. The result was that he was able to make a whole series of related films to fit a curriculum. In this, he and his school were pioneers.

The most recent catalogue shows, among other films, one series of five films on Derbyshire from the point of view of human and physical geography; physical characteristics; communication; industry, and agriculture. Another series of four films treats Somerset and Dorset in the same way, and there are several films on industries peculiar to the South-West—slate, china clay and tin.

All Hunter's work was done on 16 millimetre and by people who were at first amateurs, but who quite soon acquired a professional skill. This work he carried on until he joined the R.A.F. last year. His death has meant a great loss to the educational film, but the work which he did and the singleness of his purpose, will have an influence for many years to come.

It is profoundly to be hoped that Dartington Hall will continue the good work which Hunter started.

ARTHUR ELTON

Developments in Eire

By Liam Ó Laoghaire

(Hon. Sec. Irish Film Society)

TO THOSE who realise the limitations placed on development of the most positive aspects of the film by population problems it will seem natural that Ireland has no film production unit, no facilities for producing her own films and no past achievements of this type to encourage the pioneer of the future. Nevertheless there is great talk of an Irish Film Industry and at the present time I believe that the necessity for one is so widely felt that it would become a reality overnight were it not for the shortage of film and other technical requirements. So far the most enthusiastic supporters of the idea are the Gaelic Revival enthusiasts, ironically perhaps, for the very reason that Gaelic films would tend to limit a wide English-speaking market which would offer a considerable inducement to native sponsors of films.

Generally speaking the main interest in the film here is centred round the possibilities of documentary. It is felt that the public is behind instead of ahead of the demands of Government, through lack of vitalised education and because of a lazy reaction to the needs of social planning, consequent on years of bitter struggle for freedom and the disillusionment of civil war. The cinema is tremendously popular here but, due to the fact that it reflects nothing of the aspirations of the common people, or rather fails to clarify things faintly felt, it is purely escapist. While the best things of the world cinema come here and have their valuable place in our cinemas, yet the inner driving force is lacking that could only be produced by films that touched our

personal life and experience. Whether Ireland would have the courage to produce such films when it had a native cinema remains to be seen.

The link between the Film and Education in its widest sense has always been a conscious factor in the minds of the founders of the Irish Film Society which has so far been the only positive manifestation of the belief in the national importance of the film. This season it has given more explicit expression to this belief in tackling the problem of the Child and the Film.

The Irish Film Society

Founded in 1936 it first carried out the normal function of a Film Society and showed three years programmes of substandard films of merit drawn from all countries. In this way it enlarged the horizons of its members' powers of appreciation and at the same time carried out general propaganda work for good films. The next step was to get official recognition for its work and the granting of facilities for free import of standard programmes. This was achieved in 1939, with a consequent jump in membership.

Showing films was all very well, but there were those who wanted to make them. A film unit was started on a substandard basis and several films were produced. This in turn developed the idea of a film school with a regularly planned course of lectures running throughout the year. Again the scope of this school was widened to cover the matter of Film Appreciation and facilities were given for the general

membership of the Society to attend. To these lectures given by the cinemans were added others by outside specialists such as theatre designers, actors, teachers, folk-lore enthusiasts, and the more enlightened members of the Film Trade itself.

The final step has now been taken and with the formation of the Children's Film Committee the question of the Film in Schools and the problem of special matinées for children have been tackled. The previous experience with the Film School has been valuable here.

Children's Matinées

In September last the plan of campaign opened with several conferences with the Film Trade. Admittedly it took some time to persuade them of the fact that we merely wanted to help them solve a problem of which they were already aware and that we did not desire to assume the rôle of smug dictators. Our original intention of running special matinées ourselves was abandoned on the suggestion that the Theatre and Film Association should undertake this work. It was agreed that these matinées should be run mainly in the suburban houses of Dublin, and that two friendly observers from the Society should be present to report on the programme and to make suggestions to the management of the cinema for future improvements. It must be added that the question of the Child and the Film is rather a difficult problem in Ireland owing to the fact that there is no such thing as a Universal and an Adult Censor Certificate for films. Furthermore it is a well-established practice that week-end matinées in all the suburban city cinemas, as well as in the country, are almost entirely attended by children, irrespective of whether the film is suitable for children or not.

So much for the child in the general cinema. With the formation of a

teachers' group the roots of the problem were approached. In September last an enthusiastic meeting of teachers and the general public were inspiringly addressed by Mr. Oliver Bell, Director of the British Film Institute. The Press were most generous in their reports and editorials and the movement was under way. The Department of Education was also made aware of the work undertaken and it expressed its willingness to co-operate. But to get the work done well preparation must be put in.

A Library Formed

The teachers' group divided itself into two sections, one to deal with the formation of a sub-standard film library which could be hired out to schools. Much discussion took place on this subject and Miss McGinley, a teacher from Glasgow, was able to offer practical suggestions based on her personal experience with teaching films.

The first ten films selected were:

Seasons and their Causes, From Flax to Linen, Water Power, Fleetwood Trawlers, Holland, From Flower to Fruit, Beavers, The Wheelwright, Refining Crude Oil, Dirty Bertie.

The second section of the teachers' group concerns itself with the making of films, and scenarios are now in preparation and the first geography film on "Zones" is being made.

The offices and studio of the Society are kept busy between all these activities which are all part-time and voluntary. The Society is so far self-supporting and has earned considerable prestige for its work. Amongst the many other things which it has done in the course of its activities have been a conference on the "Child and the Film", a showing of a series of English documentary films during last winter, a series of Irish amateur films covering documentary, colour and cartoon films. Lectures have been given on the film to Library Associations, University

Extension Courses and various educational bodies.

For a very valiant co-operation we are only too glad to acknowledge our indebtedness to the British Film Institute which has been always ready to help with advice and in many other ways. That is a co-operation which means much more perhaps than films

for while we feel that the national aspects of the film must be uppermost in our minds and for historical and geographical reasons much more so in our country we do feel that it is in a larger scheme of things we finally take our place and that the film's future may be bound up with the greater future of mankind.

Essex Mobile Teaching Films

Contributed by B. E. Lawrence
(Chief Education Officer, Essex)

SINCE THE summer of 1940 the Essex Education Committee have had in operation a scheme for showing educational films in rural schools. The films used have been mostly sound films, 16 mm., although silent films have had their place.

The general method of working has been for the film vans to visit certain schools in a particular district for a period of several successive weeks, thus allowing a sequence of films to be shown, the sequence having a bearing upon the work possible in the schools visited. The head teachers of the schools are informed of the proposed series of visits, and of the films it is intended to exhibit; this programme is accompanied by notes which enable the teachers to prepare the scholars for the shows.

In the County of Essex a large number of schools are not fitted with electric power, and the only way of getting the films shown in such schools is to use a film van generating its own current. At present one such van is in operation, and a second van not equipped with apparatus for generating electricity is used in schools where there is a supply of power. The

two vans work together in the same area for several weeks and visit schools where they can best be used.*

Within the limits imposed by war-time conditions, this plan has worked well up to the present, and provided useful information on the scope of visual aids. The value of this has been noted in various subjects—particularly physical training—and teachers and organisers are enthusiastic about their use. Experience suggests that in more normal times a library of films from which teachers will be able to select those that are most suited to their needs would be of great value for exhibition at times when they will bear best upon the syllabuses of the school. In a large county the needs of some parts are different from those of others and several cinema vans could be well used.

Several difficulties have occurred during the working of the scheme, some of which are only fully appreciated with experience. The first is the unsuitability of many schools for the fitting of simple black-out devices. The

* Particulars of all the apparatus used would take up a good deal of space, but I would be glad to supply them to readers.

older schools in particular have lofty windows approximating in design to church windows, and these present great difficulties. In schools where it is impossible to provide a black-out, a special daylight screen has been used, but this in practice cannot be used with more than about 40 children.

A further difficulty is that the use of the film is quite new in a very large majority of schools visited, and the inexperience of teachers in the use of this medium is a matter for concern and attention in courses of training. Scholars too, who have been in the habit of looking to the cinema for amusement need some training in learning the art of getting value out of the educational film.

Film Supply Suggestions

The chief difficulty, however, is the lack of a sufficient supply of suitable films. The provision of films for elementary schools has not yet been undertaken in a large way. In consequence films have been used which would be more suitable for selective and secondary schools. It needs experiment and a definite effort by film producing firms and education authorities to provide simple educational films for primary and post primary schools, to overcome the difficulty.

It is to be emphasised here that the sound film is not always the best. Learning by films is pre-eminently a visual process and our experience is that commentary is often a distraction instead of a help. The best sound commentary is that made by a good teacher; and the best teaching films will be those made by a teacher of experience both in the classroom and the film studio. This last combination will necessarily be difficult to obtain.

There is a considerable demand among Youth Groups in country districts for showings of films but, owing to the need for fitting in the evening shows at times when the vans have

visited the local day school in the afternoon, it too often happens that the hungry sheep look up and are not fed. Nevertheless, several successful shows have been given during the last few months. Agricultural films have been used at meetings to form Young Farmers' Clubs and it is proposed to show some training films to pre-service cadet units. The average school film is only occasionally suitable for Youth Groups, which generally have no opportunity of preparation or of summing-up of the material. It is to be hoped that more films will be made for adolescent audiences and that the subjects and technique will not be too ingenuous or facetious to compete with commercial films at the local cinema. The interests of the adolescent are now wide and free enough to make the documentary film of the best type a powerful medium for the Day Continuation and Youth Service programmes of the future.

Useful Experience

The experience gained in the last two years in Essex has shown that the film has great possibilities in the giving not only of particular items of information, but in providing what may be called "background" for general ideas. This may be developed in connection with adult education in villages and could be used still further with Youth Clubs and Centres. But for each type of audience the selection of films is the most important consideration.

The fact remains, however, that in the schools the film is a means of education which is in its initial stage of development. It needs wide application, sufficient preparation and skilled direction. More thought must be put into the production of teaching films that will give their message through the eye with a minimum of extraneous help.

The Quarter's Films

by Evelyn Russell

THE FIRST quarter of the year disclosed an interesting fact. *Desert Victory*, a brilliant documentary showing Montgomery's epic drive from El Alamein across Egypt, Libya and Tripoli puts *Nine Men* and *Immortal Sergeant*, both of which deal with desert warfare, well into the shade. Yet *Nine Men* of itself is an excellent production. Harry Watt, who did such splendid work with the Crown Film Unit, has translated documentary approach into production-direction with such generally admirable results that *Nine Men* might easily be more fact than fiction.

Immortal Sergeant is, of course, unashamedly fiction. It is the film version of John Brophy's novel and has been well handled by John Stahl with some excellent acting from Thomas Mitchell in the name part and Henry Fonda as his corporal, though I do idly wonder how he originally got those two stripes.

Documentary Wins

But both films give place to the documentary. It is noticeable, however, that the studio productions do as a fact give to the layman a much better idea of the difficulties of actual living, as opposed to fighting, in the desert. Maybe the extra sequences necessary to stress these difficulties in the documentary would have reduced the impression of speed in the advance and as that speed was unprecedented in world history it was essential to record it as plainly as possible.

Speed has no place in *One Day of War*. The results of the work of 160 Russian camera men one given

day—June 13th, 1942—over a two thousand mile front have been brilliantly prepared by the Soviet Film Agency to give us some idea of the Soviet peoples' defence against the invader, and there is little doubt of the incredible difficulties of living both for the troops and civilians in that grim, relentless battle.

Malta, G.C., is another excellent job of work. I saw it with a man who has recently returned after nine months in the heroic little island and I quote his characteristically laconic comment, "There's nothing much wrong with that," with which I entirely agree. Arnold Bax has contributed some truly noble music. It is his first essay into music for films, and as Master of the King's Musick he could have been offered no more worthy subject.

Alwyn's Music

I was much impressed by William Alwyn's music to *Fires Were Started*, the Crown Film Unit's full-length documentary made by Humphrey Jennings on the work of the A.F.S. during the London blitz. The music is so closely knit with the shape of the film that one would be incomplete without the other. The film itself is acted entirely by men and women in their normal jobs in the fire service and shows one day and night of that grim 1940 period. No sentiment or dramatisation here. Yet what drama, and, incidentally, why go to Hollywood for stars? A masterly piece of work altogether.

Unfortunately stars from Hollywood made *Wake Island*, America's one sin-

cere contribution in the way of actuality war films. It is impossible for the average film-goer to dissociate Brian Donlevy, Robert Preston and William Bendix from the studios, fine as their performances are in the film, and although the production purports to be an accurate re-creation of the defence of Wake Island against the Japanese in December, 1941, it is very difficult indeed not to view it as another first-class studio achievement. I have no reason to doubt the factual truth of the film but somehow the atmosphere was disturbingly wrong.

Atmosphere, that elusive thing in film-making, is possessed in full measure by *The Magnificent Ambersons* in spite of—or perhaps because of—its constant gloom. Orson Welles has contrived to re-create our grandmothers' days so effectively that one understands and sympathises with early twentieth century youth in its clamour to escape and go on escaping from them. I doubt the magnificence of the Ambersons, but I do not doubt the magnificence of Orson Welles' production. Technique, acting, style, are impeccable but as things are at the moment, it will probably not fill many cinemas.

Romance Wins

It takes *Random Harvest* to do that and, I suppose, viewing films from the entertainment angle, quite justifiably, for Greer Garson and Ronald Colman act away even the frequent obtrusion of error in English detail and behaviour. It is romantic, it is dramatic, it is touching, it is sincere, and Mervyn le Roy is to be congratulated on his direction of the film version of James Hilton's novel.

Albert Lewin has tackled a more difficult subject—*The Moon and Sixpence*. Here is an unusual story, Somerset Maugham's dramatisation of the life of Paul Gauguin, and it has been handled in an unusual way. The early, pudding-like, existence of the

"hero" has been photographed in black and white. As that "hero" called Strickland develops psychologically so sepia and then colour are used. Three narrators, also in sequence, interpolate as the story progresses, the whole building up to a terrific climax in the burning of Strickland's life-work in a hut in Tahiti, after he has died of leprosy. George Saunders gives the best acting performance of his career here, and I have never seen Steve Geray or Florence Bates better.

But at least the long arm of coincidence does not stretch itself across that story as it does, double-handed almost, in *Squadron-Leader X*. Excitement, and suspense, however, have been so well sustained in the making of this film that the creeping fingers can be forgiven, perhaps forgotten. But Eric Portman's portrayal of the boastful, cowardly, bullying Luftwaffe ace pilot and Martin Miller's performance as the terrified one-time reluctant Nazi agent are not easily to be forgotten.

Atmosphere

Casablanca persists in this category, perhaps because Sydney Greenstreet has so little to do, more's the pity, and Ingrid Bergman has an unusual freshness and charm. Claud Rains' characterisation of the Anti-Vichy Captain Renault is an interesting performance and the atmosphere of heat and corruption is unmistakable. It may not be the best of its kind ever, but it is good melodrama.

There is a deal of *Suspicion* about *Shadow of a Doubt*, but Hitchcock has added something by the judicious and effective use of some of the camera and lighting angles thrust forcibly and exhaustingly upon us by Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane*. Joseph Cotton, also one of Mr. Welles' ideas, is a sinister Uncle Charlie, but it is Teresa Wright's picture. She has fulfilled all her promise and is quite outstanding as niece Charlie.

On the lighter side we had *My Sister*

Eileen, a delicious farce with Rosalind Russell on the top of her form, and *Seven Sweethearts*, which is frankly just charming make-believe and has a refreshing ingenuousness about it that is real escapism from the grimness of war.

So is *Springtime in the Rockies*, one of the extravagant technicolour *Down Argentine Way* series of musicals, the mixture as before but perhaps thinned down a little, and *The Bells of Capistrano* with Gene Autry, a very much better story than usual, and a welcome filip in direction.

Clever direction and convincing production helped us to swallow—and enjoy—the pill of discussion lusciously coated with the jam of comedy offered in *The Talk of the Town*. Jean Herbert, Cary Grant and Ronald Colman were indeed the talk of the town for quite a time. What more can picture-makers want?

Pittsburgh was used through a good story and three fine artists—Marlene Dietrich, Randolph Scott and John Wayne—to help make the public conscious of the great importance of coal and even more so of the necessity for complete understanding between employer and employee. As such the film had points but the early sequences seemed to have been handled much less expertly than the latter part of the production and the result on the whole was disappointing.

Poor Deanna

So was *The Amazing Mrs. Holliday* in the loss of the young Deanna of *Three Smart Girls* or *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, in which her voice soared like a bird in spring. The story was as convincingly told as a not very good story can be but surely a better medium could have been found for this particular artist.

Better stories were called for than *The Major and the Minor* and *Once Upon a Honeymoon* for Ginger Rogers. In the former the impossible was

asked from her—to be twelve years old, herself and her own mother. The fleeting glimpses of herself were, as usual, delightful and she managed the short “mother” sequences well, but it needed a long stretch of the imagination and partial blindness in close-ups to swallow the child section without disastrous results.

The honeymoon film was in such bad taste that both Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers add nothing to their reputations by being the protagonists. The fall of Austria and Czechoslovakia and the invasion of Poland are no background for comedy.

Crazy Comedy

But Thorn Smith's story *I Married a Witch* is delicious crazy comedy. Maybe it doesn't bear much of the pre-war Rene Clair mark, but the result with Veronica Lake as the witch and Frederick March as her husband—after much bubble-bubble, toil and trouble, to say nothing of smoke without fire, is an hour and a half's more than welcome release from the daily round.

Quite possibly *It's That Man Again* could have been a similar release, had it been frankly and entirely surrealistic as is the original radio version written by Ted Cavanagh. Unfortunately some conventional interpolation in the scripting leaves it between the proverbial two stools and apart from its curiosity value to radio admirers has little to recommend it.

There is even less merit in *Happidrome*, another radio success put on the screen, and the Askey films, except perhaps in the actual Askey sequences, fizzle out. *King Arthur was a Gentleman* is this quarter's contribution to the fizzling.

Maybe it is impossible to translate the one medium adequately into the other.

With so much less stock now available perhaps there will be fewer indifferent productions to clutter up the market.

Using The Film Strip

by A. Arkinstall,

Headmaster Callowland Junior Boys' School, Watford

IT IS much easier to be enthusiastic about a subject if it is the only one you have to teach, than if it is just one of well-nigh all the subjects in the school's curriculum. The latter is the lot of most teachers in junior schools. The English and Arithmetic alone give roughly the equivalent of two thousand books a week to handle. Illustrations for Nature Study, History, Geography and General Interest lessons are sought by the conscientious teacher; but what a time it all takes, and how often it is that the time factor rules out many of the pictures which mean so much to successful teaching.

The film strip has helped many such harassed teachers. Many have adapted the ordinary lantern but we preferred to buy out of school funds a lantern designed primarily for film strips. It is of the universal type with a 250-watt lamp. A six inch focal length projection lens for hall use gives a well illuminated picture five feet by four at a distance of about 35 feet. An alternative 3-inch focal length projection lens suits general classroom needs as it gives a well-defined image 3 ft. $\times$ 2 at 15 ft. Either horizontally or vertically printed pictures can be projected since it is but a matter of turning the film strip holder and gate unit through an angle of 90 degrees. This unit can be removed and replaced by a slide carrier for individual 35 mm. film pictures cut from a film strip. The whole apparatus weighs but three to four lbs. and can be carried in a case 18" $\times$ 12" $\times$ 6".

The school projection room has a white, matt screen, the hall an aluminium painted screen and the classrooms a portable affair of aluminium

paint sprayed black-out cloth.

In addition to the projector we have a film strip viewer. This small, light piece of apparatus—it fits comfortably into a small attaché case—can be plugged in to either a two-pin mains point or lamp holder. With it the pictures can be viewed side by side with the lecture notes so often supplied with the film strip. These, by the way, save much research as they, and the set of pictures, are compiled by specialists in the particular subject as a general rule.

The School Library

When a teacher wishes to use a film from the school's library of strips, the viewer, film strip and notes are borrowed beforehand for preparation. If the film strip has not been used before it is usually numbered during this preview and a note made of the pictures suitable for the particular aspect of the lesson.

It is surprising how easily the sequence of the pictures can be memorised as a whole with the film strip as compared with a set of glass slides. Usually a leading-up lesson is given to prepare the way for the pictures. The word-pictures of the teacher help the visual illustrations of the film strip to get home the subject matter of the lesson.

The lessons are taken most frequently in the normal classroom. It takes between two to three minutes to set the lantern and screen in position and to darken the outside windows. A board across a desk serves as a table for the lantern and the screen is hung at a height of 6 ft. 6 in. from the floor to the top of the screen. A boy of nine

is quite capable of turning the spool knob or making slight focal adjustments. This leaves the teacher free to work at the screen. The room is not entirely dark since a well illuminated picture is obtained even though the inside windows to the hall and other classrooms are uncovered.

The lantern is designed to allow the fullest value to be had from each picture without the film being overheated. Occasionally a slight focal adjustment is necessary when the film convexes slightly vertically through being warm. No doubt the makers will find a means of dealing with this problem. The lessons run smoothly as there is no fear of pictures getting in the wrong way round to break the spell of continuity.

The Follow-up

A follow-up lesson a few days later is as necessary for the film strip as the broadcast lesson, or the motion picture film. Having a school library of film strips is a great advantage since they may be used for reference with either viewer or projector. The carriage both ways of a set of slides will purchase a film strip which is always to hand.

Some of the strips are made from films dealing with the same subject. When we find this the fact is used to its fullest advantage. For instance one on rubber was used as an introduction to the motion film *Rubber in Malaya*. That procedure in effect was using the motion film for quick revision. Before we had the film strips the still picture device on our "Bolex" was used during a second run-through of the film in order to point out an important item of background, e.g. shadow in equatorial Africa, facial expressions and features in *Nanook of the North*. This was not always a success and has much argument against the practice on various grounds, particularly psychological.

We find the children are developing their powers of criticism. They absorb the film strip pictures and ask ques-

tions which go below the surface because there is time. Thus when a strip film has led up to a cine film very often more is expected than is given. "Why were there no polar bears in *Nanook*?" asked one eight-year-old. "It was not worth seeing," said two or three youngsters of *From Seam to Cellar*, which followed a film strip on coal.

A Crying Need

More film strips are needed. Many of those now on the market are out of date. They have been made directly from sets of lantern slides which should be brought up to date since clothing and machinery alone have changed considerably in the past ten years. The clothing in particular asks for ridicule and spoils an effect the teacher has taken great pains to create. Processes in industry have also changed. The older methods can be shown by way of contrast or to trace development, but the new must be there.

There is a place for both types of apparatus. We would suggest that the film strip should supplement the cine film, or *vice versa* according to the subject, where possible while agreeing that there are occasions when the use of one or the other will suffice. Processes such as those in *Workaday* are best shown in motion.

Just Out

TEACHING WITH SCHOOL PROJECTORS

1s. 6d.

"A most valuable pamphlet."

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1

Children's Cinema Clubs

Contributed by Odeon Theatres Ltd.

IN ITS Report published in 1932, the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films stated: "It is important to keep a distinction between the two (educational and entertainment films). Recreation and improvement should not be confused . . . the pill should be palatable without disguise and the jam should conceal nothing."

Another authority, writing in "Children in the Cinema", stated: "Both members of the film industry and social bodies have failed in the past when they have tried to attract children to pay to see a semi-educational programme."

Arthur Rank, who has succeeded the late Mr. Oscar Deutsch, as Chairman of the Odeon group of theatres, has taken up this challenge, and has decided to experiment with his newly started Odeon National Cinema Clubs for Boys and Girls. He believes that he can provide healthy, full-blooded entertainment, and at the same time improve the minds, and influence the behaviour of child audiences—without the children being aware that they have been the subjects of any such experiment.

Support for this theory has come from the Brains Trust. At the end of February, in answer to a question whether illustrated weekly "Comics" had a harmful effect on the child mind, Dr. Malcolm Sargent, with the support of the other members, gave it as his opinion that they quite often taught the children a useful lesson and improved their minds without their knowing it. Though it would probably be right to say that any actively good results accruing from a perusal of a "comic" would be accidental.

This new Odeon Cinema Club, on the other hand, consciously intends that the influence exercised by the children's matinée should be good. In the past, the trade has been only too often content with a negative attitude. If there was *nothing harmful* in the films shown, a very noble job of work had been done!

The normal children's matinée programme consists of a cartoon, a full-length feature (usually a western), and an episode from a serial. Mr. Rank proposes to continue this liberal helping of entertainment, but in addition he has decided to include one short dealing with some such subject as travel, strange customs, animal or bird life. This film will be most carefully chosen, because the whole object will be defeated if the children feel they are having camouflaged education foisted on them.

There is no question of the film being "slipped in". This would undoubtedly create distrust in the child mind. On the contrary, the manager is to call special attention to it by announcing it from the stage immediately before it is screened. To ensure that the youngsters will pay attention, competitions are to be regularly run in connection with them. Maybe the children will be invited to write a short essay or draw something from the film. What form the competition takes, however, is to be left to the discretion of the individual manager.

Another innovation, following the Russian example, will be the use of coloured slides of humorous drawings with little rhymes written underneath each calling attention to the advantages for instance of cleanliness, observing

road safety rules, or being kind to animals.

The old Mickey Mouse ritual has been improved upon and each Saturday morning the managers read the children the Club "Promise", a single little pledge ending, "I promise to try and make this great country of ours a better place to live in."

Following up the same idea it is intended to encourage and develop Children's Committees whose members will be older boys and girls selected by the manager, or elected by the children themselves. They will act as monitors during the performance, and also as sick stewards, visiting Club

members who are ill and taking them any books or toys other children may have finished with, and given in to the management. These committee members too, will act as the leaders when the Club takes part in any local activity, e.g., salvage drives. Some really praiseworthy results have already been achieved in this direction.

By this combination of entertainment films, interest films and Club spirit, Arthur Rank feels confident that he will prove that it is possible both to have your cake and eat it, to entertain and at the same time to help build character and make his audiences well-behaved and useful young citizens.

It Won't Last for Ever Says Elizabeth Cross

MEANING the war, brothers and sisters of the film industry. No, it won't last for ever, and all the bored millions of Service people and all the equally bewildered industrial workers who happen to be living in lousy lodgings, and who flock to the cinema for a comfortable seat, will have something else to do.

At the moment business is good, gratifying queues form outside every cinema. You must go somewhere when you've a spot of off-duty and we haven't all got haystacks to help us with our courting. Even so, in spite of the willing way in which pockets yield up their cash, the owners of the said cash aren't entirely unconscious, at least not all the time. They go in, and they come out, remarking that it wasn't up to much. Then they go in again next week because there's nothing else to do.

Naturally enormous quantities of dumb bunnies will continue to make any show their regular diet, but still

greater quantities of more human types will be so sick of the sight of films that they will shudder at the glimpse of a still.

So now is the time to take a little notice of the carping and complaining that film critics hand out so generously. Of course it is possible that, unlike the higher apes, producers are incapable of learning by experience. In fact it would almost appear that way, as in spite of monotonous reminders concerning the following errors, they just go right ahead in the dear old way.

1. Attention to detail—lack of.

It may not be pleasing, but it is necessary, to throw Mr. Noel Coward into other producers' teeth once more. What I mean is, if he can take the trouble to find out (to a terrifying degree of exactitude) the type of hat worn by Petty Officers' wives, well why can't others do likewise in similar circumstances.

Another detail, peculiarly irritating to all who service and use them, is the way in which film machine guns continue to fire as long as required, never needing anything so mundane as reloading. We know the Army Film Unit leads anything but a sheltered life, but we have a feeling about some of the others . . . well . . . perhaps they'll find out one day.

2. Story Plots—also lack of.

In the present type of musical, all talkie, all screamy, it is considered unnecessary to have a plot. That is sheer laziness, but it may be overlooked. However, when it comes to something a trifle more serious why not get a story with some meat in it, and, startling innovation, stick to the story? At the moment serious films are divided between adaptations (often painful in the extreme) of some popular success, such as *Gone With the Wind*, which are almost impossibly unwieldy to handle, or trite semi-documentaries featuring planes or parachute heroes with a chunk of love thrown in for make-weight. (Again excepting Mr. Coward's offering, for which many thanks.) To think that we are now threatened with a film version of "War and Peace" is enough to affright the strongest soul. (By the way, it seems strange that no one has yet attempted a snappy version of the Old Testament . . . or isn't it?)

3. Actors and Actresses—again lack of.

A high level of competence has been attained by a large number of mediocre performers, but where are the great? Emotion is lacking more than ever (again excepting in Mr. Coward's piece which reduced flocks of the navy-blue audience, including Admirals and A.B.'s to gulps and nose blowing, and very proper too.) Garbo made those

who appreciated her, sniff or rejoice, while others jeered and groaned. Now they have reduced her to what? Spencer Tracey can call forth feeling, but who else is there to keep him company?

You may laugh at old fashioned silent drama, with its vamps and its thrills and tears, but you remember it all the same. It may have been crude and preposterous but it was exciting. Those of us who were brought up on Valentino and the Gish sisters had our money's worth and came out feeling as if we'd been through a turkish bath and a roller mill at the same time, and we talked about it for weeks afterwards. Today it's hard to say what you saw the day before yesterday, it upset you so little! Enormous amounts of earthquakes, typhoons, or even dive bombers won't make up for lack of personal feeling and until we have enough players to put over sheer human emotion the cinema is going to grow more and more mechanical.

Well, isn't that enough? The majority of films are still sloppily made, with the attitude that if you throw in enough herds of elephants, prairie fires and other expensive items you needn't bother whether the hero is using a sword that wasn't invented until a century or so later. But it won't do. People are already starting to pick everything to pieces (I'm not the only one) and they refuse to swallow and enjoy a film that offends their sense of reality.

The actual film stories are mangy and the acting is often mangier.

As for the majority of shorts . . . but you know about them.

Did I hear a still small voice enquire why I go to the cinema? The answer is that I don't, except when I'm paid to. (With the exception of Mr. Coward's opus, for the pleasure of which I actually paid to go in, and it was worth it. So laugh that off. I mean, if he can do it, why not somebody else?)

News from the Societies

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

The Conference on The Film in National Life which was organised by the British Film Institute, and held at the University College of the South-West at Exeter during the first week-end in April, was attended by well over 100 people, all of whom voted the affair a great success. It also provided an opportunity for private arguments and discussions between the delegates who represented a most wide and varied assortment of interests.

Unfortunately one of the lecturers, Dr. Doris Odium, who was down to speak on "The Psychology of Cinema Going", was taken ill with influenza at the last minute and was unable to be present. Important contributions, however, were made by Dr. Macalister Brew, the Education Secretary of the National Council of Girls' Clubs, who gave an admirable talk on Adolescents and the Cinema; and by Dr. Viktor Fischl of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Information, whose topic was the International Influence of the Cinema.

Four Discussion Groups were organised on the Film in the Classroom, the Film in Adult Education, the Film and Civics, and Film Appreciation, though the time was too short for profound discussion. There were interesting exchanges of views, and draft reports from each group were presented to the closing session.

The speeches, including those at the opening meeting of Dr. John Murray, the Principal of the University College of the South-West, and of Sir William Brass, M.P., the Chairman of the Governing Body of the Institute, will be published as soon as possible.

The Governors are glad to be able to announce the publication of Teaching with School Projectors [1s. 6d.]. It is the most important and valuable pamphlet published by the Institute since its companion volumes Choosing School Projectors and Using School Projectors. The first edition is nearly sold out already. A new list of 16 mm. Geography and Travel Teaching Films [2s.] has been published, and so has a List of Geography Films classified by subjects [2s.]. This is a new departure and nothing else like it exists anywhere. It should prove most useful to harassed teachers.

At the request of the Board of Education the Institute is considering undertaking the distribution of the new British Council

teaching films. These fall into three series dealing with Geography, Biology and Physics [Heat]. The first to be acquired will be Market Town in the geography series which shows the *raison d'être* of a market town and the functions which it performs. Also to be acquired are the Life History of Maize and the Life History of the Newt and Pinmould in the Biology Growth and Reproduction Series.

The Education Panel of the Institute has before it a Report on the use of film strip in schools. Readers of this JOURNAL will have seen the articles on the subject which we have recently published. Should the final draft have been adopted by the time our next issue goes to press we hope to have it considered in a special article.

The Institute is collaborating with A.B.C.A. in the production of a special portable exhibition on the cinema. After the exhibition has been round the various Commands it is hoped that it will be able to be made available to civilian borrowers.

NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY

The Loan Section has evidently met a real need in supplying illustration material for film appreciation work, and the number of people hiring films, and the number of films sent out during the 1942-43 season have exceeded all previous figures. The Library Committee is anxious to increase the range of the Loan Section and to remedy its deficiencies, of which the most conspicuous is the complete absence of any of the work of D. W. Griffith. Although the war has virtually put an end to the international exchange of films for cultural purposes, renewed efforts are being made to obtain at least one or two of the D. W. Griffith films for the coming season from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York.

Preservation

As the result of evidence that very early films in the Preservation Section were likely under certain conditions to become unstable (in which condition the celluloid base tends to break down altogether) chemical tests have been instituted, and are being systematically applied to all films in the Library. These tests (for artificial ageing, acidity, presence of hypo and fading) which have been devised by the research department of Messrs. Kodak Ltd., give an advance indication of whether a film is likely to deteriorate, and thus

enable the Library to make a new print of it before the deterioration has any marked effect.

The first report on the testing showed that incipient instability was indicated on eleven films out of 97: in view of the fact that all these films were of early date and had been specially segregated as doubtful cases to be given priority in testing, the proportion is encouragingly low. Reports of the tests are being card-indexed and fresh entries will be made as the tests are periodically repeated: thus the Library will have a continuous technical record of the life of each film in its possession.

A beginning is also being made on the indexing of the contents of films in the preservation section. A card catalogue, parallel with the technical card index, will record information of each film, while a subject index to this catalogue, utilising the Universal Decimal Classification, will be prepared concurrently with it.

Additions

The following new additions to the Preservation Section of the Library were made during the last quarter:—

Meet John Doe (Warner); 1941; Frank Capra; Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck. *Hold That Ghost* (G.F.D.); 1941; Arthur Lubin; Abbott and Costello. *Jeannie* (G.F.D.); 1941; Hal. French; Barbara Mullen, Michael Redgrave. *Seven Sinners* (G.F.D.); 1941; Ray Garnett; Marlene Dietrich, John Wayne. *Bank Detective* (G.F.D.); 1941; Ed. Cline; Una Merkel, W. C. Fields; *Cottage to Let* (G.F.D.); 1941; Antony Asquith; Leslie Banks, Alastair Sim, John Mills. *Flame of New Orleans* (G.F.D.); 1941; Rene Clair; Marlene Dietrich, Bruce Cabot. *Invasion* (Columbia); 1942; discussion short on Britain's chances against invasion. *Appointment for Love* (G.F.D.) 1942; Wm. Seiter; Margaret Sullavan, Charles Boyer. *40,000 Horsemen* (G.F.D.); 1941; Chas. Chauvel; Grant Taylor, Betty Bryant. *Hi Gang* (G.F.D.); 1941; Marcel Varnel; Bebe Daniels, Vic Oliver, Ben Lyon. *Major Barbara* (G.F.D.); 1941; Gabriel Pascal; Wendy Hiller, Rex Harrison, Robt. Morley. *49th Parallel* (G.F.D.); 1941; Michael Powell; Eric Portman, Leslie Howard, Anton Walbrook. *It Started with Eve* (G.F.D.); 1941; Henry Koster; Deanna Durbin, Charles Laughton, Robt. Cummings. *The Waxworks* (from Mr. Wakeling); Germany, 1923; directed by Fritz Lang. *The Nibelungs* (from Mr. Wakeling); Germany, 1923; directed by Paul Leni; with Emil Jannings, Conrad Veidt. *Warning Shadows* (from Mr. Wakeling); Germany, 1922; Arthur Robinson, with Fritz

Kortner. *Volga Volga* (from Mr. Wakeling); Germany, 1925; Tourjansky, with Hans Schletteon. *Crazy Ray* (from Mr. Wakeling); France, 1922-3; by Rene Clair, with Albert Prejean, Henri Rollin. *She Devil* (from Mr. Wakeling); Germany, 1918; a silent feature. *Lady of the Camelias* (from Mr. Wakeling); France, 1912; with Sarah Bernhardt. *The Schoolmistress and the Waif* (from Mr. Wakeling); an early silent one-reel drama. *Rudolf Valentino* (from Mr. Wakeling); a news-reel compilation on the famous star. *40 Years Ago* (from Mr. Wakeling); a one-reel flash-back film made up from early extracts.

BELFAST FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY

Belfast Film Institute Society began in November, 1942, a season of six repertory shows which have been well supported both by members and by a large floating population of guests and Forces visitors. Most popular were *La Grande Illusion* and *Remontons les Champs Elysées*. *We from Kronstadt*, *The New Teacher*, and *Quai des Brumes* were also shown for the first time in Northern Ireland: while *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, which was shown here some seasons ago at a memorable midnight matinée, lost little of its power in revival. A wide variety of shorts has been shown, ranging from *Russian Salad* and assorted Soviet shots, to *Western Isles*, *Rainbow Dance* and various Disneys. *The Hague*, strangely, did not go down too well. Belfast, does not take kindly to the *avant garde* even several years *après*.

Belfast is perhaps the stoniest ground in the United Kingdom in which to cultivate a Film Society. Audiences like their entertainment to be solid and well rounded off: they like to be sure of their moneysworth: hence the popularity of the meaty French films and Sacha Guitry. Yet Belfast is slowly learning to appreciate the less obvious. The Society is doing quite well after a varied career of some eight years, and no praise is too high for the faithful nucleus of members who have kept the Society going since dissolution threatened at the outbreak of war.

Shows are being given on Wednesday evenings in the Grosvenor Hall, a large echoing building that seems, to the Film Society tucked snugly away up in the gallery, about half the size of the Albert Hall. The monthly bulletin and guide to releases in Belfast continues to be circulated free to members and to keep the Society together as a body.

Cavalcanti's *Film and Reality* was given as an extra show on April 21. Teachers and school parties were admitted at special rates.

MANCHESTER FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY

Manchester and District Film Institute Society reports another successful season arranged with Manchester and Salford Film Society. Three Sunday shows in the Rivoli cinema and four other events took place between February and April. Feature films consisted of *The New Teacher*, which was very warmly received, *L'étrange Monsieur Victor* and *The Circus*.

In early February we were honoured by a visit from Mr. Oliver Bell, who indicated to us some new tendencies in cinema and likely developments after the war. He showed us three propaganda films made for overseas audiences, the beautiful *Canadian Landscape*, made in Canada; our old friend, *Queen Cotton*, and *Carry On, Children*, both made in Britain.

In colour shorts it has been interesting to note the marked superiority of Kodachrome over other processes, although *Colour in Clay*, *World Garden* and *Springtime in Palestine* were much enjoyed.

Sub-standard shows have attracted smaller but enthusiastic audiences and have included a programme of films and music of the Allies, a study of recent scientific films and a delightful afternoon when the atmosphere of an old picture palace was conjured up by Mr. George Wynn's reminiscences of early film-making, four classics from the National Film Library and the exquisite accompaniments of an "old-time" lady pianist.

COLWYN BAY FILM SOCIETY

Six out of the seven performances arranged for this season have been given. At each of the performances there has been an audience of between 800 and 900, including Forces guests of the Society. The following films have been shown: *La Kermesse Heroique*, *The Bright Path*, *La Femme du Boulanger*, *Quai des Brumes*, *Peter the Great*, and *Maskerade*. The programmes have been supported by shorts such as *The Gay Parisien*, a film of the ballet; *Early One Morning*, a Swedish film; *The River*, *Early Actualities* and *The Great Train Robbery*. The last performance of the season was held on April 18th. The annual general meeting of the Society will take place on May 25th.

MERSEYSIDE FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY

Phoenix-like the Merseyside Society has re-established itself after its temporary eclipse by the Luftwaffe, and the season now drawing to a close has been a qualified success. The shows at the Philharmonic Hall have been well supported.

In February there was a packed house for *Ignace*, supported by *Our Film* and *What so Proudly we Hail*. On March 16th

the feature was a revival of *The Long Voyage Home*, John Ford's notable but neglected film. A fortnight later the Society organised a show for the Association of Friends of French Volunteers, which raised approximately £80 for the Association's Nursery Fund. The programme on this occasion included *Fighting French* (March of Time), *Un Village Dans Paris*, and *Les Trois de St. Cyr*.

Mr. Oliver Bell was unable to attend the *New Teacher* show as arranged, but he visited Liverpool in February and spent an evening with the Committee discussing policy and plans. To conclude the season there will be a visit to the Liverpool Playhouse at the end of April to take part in a discussion which will be led by Mr. Tyrone Guthrie of the Old Vic, and finally a special exhibition of M.O.I. shorts on May 4th, when Sir Edward Villiers, of the Films Division of the Ministry, will speak.

The issue of an explanatory leaflet has contributed to the revived interest in the Society, and nearly a dozen new members are joining each week.

ABERDEEN FILM SOCIETY

The Society has just completed its ninth season when seven double performances have been given at monthly intervals, and the general opinion is that it has been a very successful season in every way. With an increase of over forty per cent on last year's membership and the attendance of a record number of guests throughout the winter, it would appear that there is a reawakening of interest in the Society's activities.

On January 31st *A Musical Story* was the feature film, and it proved as popular in Aberdeen as it has done elsewhere. Along with this was shown an interesting and topical short, *Moscow. My Lady's Dress and Memory Tricks* were also included in this programme. The former was much less interesting than it ought to have been and would certainly have been improved if it had been in colour.

Le Dernier Tournant, the main film on February 28th, received much well-deserved praise, but good though it was, *Burgtheatre*, which was shown at the last performance on March 28th, was voted by many members to be the best feature film this season. It is the acting of the late Werner Krauss which makes this film so outstanding. *Colour in Clay*, an excellent short film about pattern making, and *Polar Trappers* completed this performance, and the latter was enjoyed so much that one wonders if every Film Society programme should not include a Walt Disney cartoon.

THE FILM SOCIETY OF AYRSHIRE

On April 5th the curtains closed on a season that has been considered by the vast majority of members to be the best yet presented by the Society. Evidence of this opinion is reflected in the fact that at Ayr the cinema has been filled to capacity on four occasions, while at Kilmarnock the attendance has risen steadily at each performance.

With three exceptions, each programme has been composed on a theme, a policy giving satisfaction to the members, rhythm to the performance and a headache to the Council in selecting films. "To See Oorsels," a programme having a sly dig at Scotland, brought Rene Clair's tartan-tearer *The Ghost Goes West* and Victor Saville's *Storm in a Teacup*; "This Scepter'd Isle," a fortnight later, had *Fire Over England* supported by Marion Griereson's *For All Eternity*, the unusual *Cavalcade of the Navy*, C.E.M.A. and Massingham's *And So to Work*. The programme on "Rural America" had to be abandoned because the condition of *Three Faces West* was such that it could not be screened, but *Our Town* was made the basis of a programme on the countryside, with *The Harvest Shall Come* and *Power and the Land* in chief support, and *The Ugly Duckling* providing light relief.

La Marseillaise headed the ninth programme, which was attended by over 100 boys and girls from the local secondary schools. Other films at this performance included the very American *Menace of the Rising Sun* and the rather disappointing *A Modern Miracle*. *Claudine* had a very fine reception at the seventh meeting, and it was well backed up by Pare Lorentz' *The City* and the atmospheric *Winter on the Farm*. For the last meeting of the season a contrasting programme on "From Stage to Screen" was shown, the two features, *Love from a Stranger* and *The Boys from Syracuse*, being separated by number four of *Worker and the War Front*.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY FILM SOCIETY

Although the present-day university population is pretty transient the Society's programme continues to receive adequate support. The first show of 1943 consisted of a revival of Garson Kanin's *A Man to Remember*, with Joris Ivens' *Power and the Land* and Georg Pal's *Aladdin*. Two further shows were given during the Lent Term; at the first *The General Line* was shown, with a supporting programme illustrating newsreel technique, at the second the main film was *Battleship Potemkin*, prefaced with an introduction by Basil Wright. In contrast to previous years, three shows have been planned for the summer, during the Easter Term; two of these will be presented in collaboration with the S.C.R. and the A.Sc.W.

THE BRADFORD CIVIC PLAYHOUSE

Looking back on the plans outlined a few months ago, it is interesting to notice reactions to the actual programmes. The much discussed *Citizen Kane* had a very mixed reception at the Playhouse, though on the whole favourable. Although it came in for more criticism than was expected, it aroused much interest and started many arguments, which is all to the good. *The Last Night* and *Jeannie* were both enjoyed, and *Of Mice and Men* had a good reception. Revivals which have been much appreciated were *Gens Du Voyage* and the delightful *Les Perles de la Couronne*. *Queen Cotton*, *World Garden*, *Two Ballerinas*, *Temples of India*, and *What so Proudly we hail* have been outstanding short films shown, and *Beginnings of Cinema* was received with affectionate amusement and interest.

Stagecoach will be the last of our season of Sunday Film Society shows. Bookings for weekly showings in April are *Judas was a Woman* and *Fall of a Tyrant* for features, with *Moscow Parade* and *South of the Border* amongst the short films.

DAWN TRUST FILM LIBRARY

SOMETHING NEW. SOMETHING IMPRESSIVE. SOMETHING PROFESSIONAL

Religious and Uplift feature films really worth showing. 16 mm.

Our Stars include: Eric Portman, Nova Pilbeam, Michael Redgrave, Emyln Williams, John Garrick, Hugh Williams, Paul Muni, Kay Francis, Ian Hunter, George Arliss, Fay Compton, James Mason, Flora Robson.

Stars Look Down, The Crypt, Emile Zola, White Angel, Louis Pasteur, Green Pastures, Silent Voice, Pastor Hall, Lily of Killarney, Monastery Garden, Manger to Cross, Men of Yesterday, Immortal Song, Mill on the Floss, Last Adventurers, Scrooge, Sheepdog, John Halifax, Turn of the Tide, Vicar of Bray, Poison Pen.

For discounts write to:

REV. BRIAN HESSON, DAWN TRUST, LTD., AYLESBURY, BUCKS.
AYLESBURY 649.

GIRL GUIDES' ASSOCIATION

In their efforts to raise money for the Baden Powell Memorial Fund, Guides have been giving "film shows" all over the country, and it has been hard to keep pace with the demands on the film library.

The final drive for the Fund was linked up with the Army Pigeon Service, who very kindly arranged for pigeons to fly from every county to their London headquarters on February 20th, bringing messages to Guides in other countries.

Some of the county ceremonials were filmed, including T.R.H. The Princess Royal and the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret releasing pigeons and these, together with a film made of the birds flying in to the Chief Guide in London, are being made into a composite film. This should be of great interest to the Guides and keep fresh in their memory a very happy day, the outcome of which raised the Baden Powell Memorial Fund to a total of £80,000.

WORKERS FILM ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Because of the great public interest in the Beveridge Report on Social Security, the Workers Film Association Ltd. felt that the public would be attracted to lectures on this subject if films were shown dealing with the problems with which the Report relates. A circular was therefore sent to democratic bodies suggesting lectures illustrated by films. A series of twenty films was included in the circular and the response was immediate. Film lectures were given at places so far apart as Ebbw Vale and Scarborough, Manchester and Woking, and already over fifty requests have been received for lectures and films in various parts of the country.

A similar scheme was prepared for youth organisations. A series of programmes of films of special interest to young people was compiled, and whilst a proportion of the programmes consisted of entertainment films, films dealing specifically with problems of youth were incorporated. Here again, the response was immediate and widespread.

In the course of the next few weeks, a further series of Soviet feature films will be added to the library of the Association. New Soviet shorts appear in the second supplementary list, including *The Right to Rest*, *Hermitage Museum*, *Palace of Pioneers*, *Moscow Underground*, *Puppet Theatre* and *Children's Art Education*. The hiring charge for each of these films is 5s. per day.

Arrangements are being made for a Film School and Week-end Conference to be held in London, covering the period of one week, commencing July 17th. Full particulars will be announced soon.

CINE SCREENS

EVERY KIND,
AMATEUR AND
PROFESSIONAL

E. G. TURNER,

43-47 Higham St., Walthamstow, E.17

"NAVY WINGS OF GOLD"

—a thrill for the air-minded, is the latest 16mm. sound film in our Library. Just received from the States it shows the training of U.S. pilots—educational and entertaining.

Send stamp for list of all our 16mm. sound films.

**Balmforth Films, Rydal Mount,
Ruff Lane, Ormskirk, Lancashire**

Travel abroad during school hours, through
the medium of the screen.

DENMARK · SWEDEN · INDIA
SWITZERLAND · AFRICA
via

DAVIS SOUND FILM EQUIPMENTS
22 Lynn Road, WISBECH.

Full lists of features, shorts and NEWSREEL
on request.

FILM LIBRARIES

Following Catalogues now available at 9d. each plus 3d.
postage. (1st editions 1943)

8mm Film Library. 16mm Sound and Silent Film
Library. (Illustrated supplement of sound features 6d.
extra) 9.5mm Sound and Silent Film Library.
Over 4,000 films in stock. Additions monthly

J. G. KIRKHAM

SUBSTANDARD FILM SERVICE, WINWICK
ROAD, WARRINGTON :: Phone 245

16mm. Sound Films

- First class selection of feature, musical, interest, comedy, cartoon (colour) films
- All films in perfect condition
- Efficient service—no deposit—pre-war hire rates
- New films added regularly
- Fully illustrated catalogue, order forms etc., post paid 6d.

**J. K. Film Service, 125 London Road,
Camberley, Surrey**

"On Dit . . ."

We hear it said by some that it is unpatriotic to be thinking of what we shall do when peace comes—that the right thing to do is to win the war first.

Others say that a sane world, in which we can hope to find the opportunity for the freedom of self-expression, will not come (victory or no victory) unless we plan consciously and conscientiously *now*.

The truth lies, probably, somewhere between the two.

For our part every effort is being strained towards helping forward the national cause by every means in our power.

At the same time we are not blind to the fact that the Cinema—and particularly the privately owned cinema in the School, the Club, the Canteen and the Youth Hostel—is going to play a part of inestimable importance in helping people to think in a constructive manner when the new era dawns.

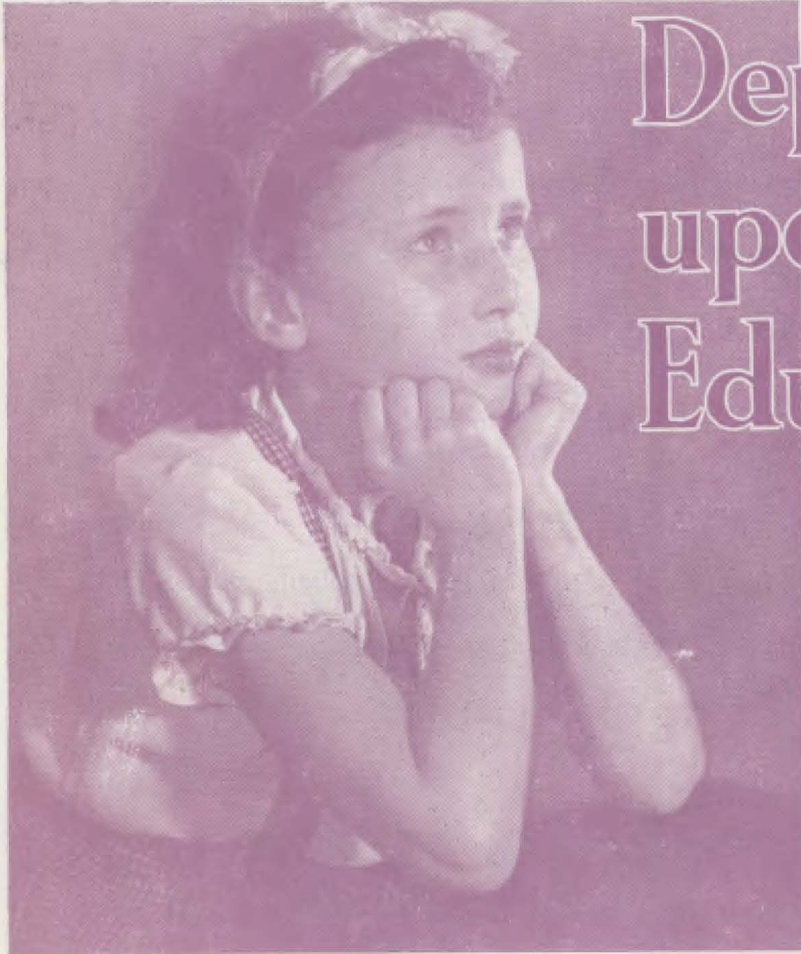
That is why our post-war plans provide for the supply on a large scale of 16 m.m. Sound Projectors and Equipment. We plan to be ready to help in your problems. We ask you in the meanwhile to

KEEP KALEE IN MIND

PROJECTION & SOUND
EQUIPMENT, SCREENS,
SEATING, CARPETS, STAGE
DRAPERIES, LIGHTING,
DECORATIONS

KALEE LTD., 60-66 WARDOUR STREET, LONDON, W.1, AND BRANCHES. PHONE: GERRARD 51
FACTORIES AT LEEDS, LONDON AND HIGH WYCOMBE

The Future of Britain



Depends
upon their
Education

For many years G. B. Equipments have collaborated with leading scientists and members of the Teaching profession in producing films of educational value. These are available in 35 and 16mm. size and in Sound and Silent form to cover a whole range of subjects from biology to sociology. Realising that the future of Britain depends upon a fuller and more complete education of the young generation G.B. Equipments are preparing now to make a still worthier contribution when the war is won. Then the well known GeBescope Sound-on-film projectors will again be available as well as further Educational film productions.

Gaumont British Instructional Films

Complete Descriptive Catalogue sent on request

G.B. EQUIPMENTS LTD., WOODCHESTER, Nr. STROUD, GLOS.

SIGHT AND SOUND

VOL 12 NO 46

ARTICLES: SOUTH AFRICAN CINEMA
FILMS AND SCIENCE
HVERFANDA HVELI
A COURSE IN FILM APPRECIATION

CONTRIBUTORS: Keith F. Bean
B. E. Gillett
Arthur Vesselo
R. W. Wilson
S. H. V. Argent

6^{D.}

PUBLISHED BY
THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1



CINEMA EQUIPMENT

The BTH Company is one of the world's leading electrical manufacturing firms and has been prominent in the development and manufacture of all kinds of electric plant and equipment, from the largest turbo-alternator to the smallest motor, and including:—

SOUND REPRODUCER EQUIPMENTS

PROJECTORS

LANTERNS

RECTIFIERS

STAGE AMPLIFICATION EQUIPMENT

AUDITORIUM AND ARCHITECTURAL

LIGHTING

MAZDA LAMPS, AND MAZDALUX

LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

• •

BTH

THE BRITISH THOMSON-HOUSTON CO., LTD.
CROWN HOUSE, ALDWYCH, LONDON, W.C.2.

A3312N

or

SOUND EQUIPMENT LTD., 123, Widmore Road, Bromley, Kent.

Sight and Sound

VOLUME 12 NO 46

HVERFANDA HVELI. An Account of film-going in Iceland by a member of the R.A.F. stationed there	29	A TECHNICAL SCHOOL FILM SOCIETY: An account of a society organised in the Technical School, Cambridge, by R. W. Wilson, B.Sc.	40
SOUTH AFRICAN CINEMA: by T. Gutsche, Film Adviser to the South African Bureau of Information, Johannesburg	31	RETROGRADE NOVELTIES: B. E. Gillett	42
A COURSE IN FILM APPRECIATION: S. H. V. Argent, Tutor for Adult Education, Lancashire Education Committee	33	TOMORROW'S PROBLEMS: An account of the Workers' Film Association's new schemes	44
A LETTER TO OLIVER BELL from Keith F. Bean	35	FILMS AND SCIENCE: Derek Stewart	45
FILMS FOR AFRICANS: Reprinted by permission from <i>Colonial Cinema</i>	39	A WORD TO FILM-MAKERS: Lt. Arthur Vesselo, A.E.C.	47
		UNDERGRADUATE ENTERPRISE: An account of Oxford's Amateur production of Sterne's <i>Sentimental Journal</i>	49
		NOTES AND NEWS	50

HVERFANDA HVELI*

(An Extract from a letter received from a member of the R.A.F. stationed in Iceland)

IT DOES not seem so long ago that I used to visit my local Gaumont pretty often, or the old Cameo to see an early Chaplin, or maybe some documentary titbit at the Tatler. Since I've been in the R.A.F. it's been a bit different; and now up here in the Arctic Circle we just make do with our Nyjabio—not that it's at all a bad place!

The cinema in Akureyri was built in 1929 and is small. In fact it is about the size of that little place at home in London where they show re-issues and other fairly old stuff. It is plain inside, quite clean, and all seats are bookable in advance, and there are three shows daily (3 p.m., 6 p.m., 9 p.m.). The programme consists of one feature film plus a short or a news reel if you're lucky. "No smoking" (Reking vorbut) is the rule in all cinemas, and the

screen is more brilliant as a result.

Being the only entertainment available, the Icelanders treat a visit to the "Bio" as a real evening out, and parade in all their Sunday finery. The R.A.F. usually makes a night of it and books a whole row.

The films are usually American and pretty ancient. There are no sub-titles, so if the audience doesn't understand English, they have just "had it". However, as a guide to the story, they sell programmes in the small "foyer," which gives in Icelandic a summary of the plot. They stop the film half-way through, and the audience troops out of the cinema for a smoke. This is quite crazy, for as soon as they get outside the film starts up again and you manage to miss quite a chunk!

There is no such thing as a trailer system, and even now I am not quite sure how they change the films. You

* Icelandic for "Gone With the Wind."

get something like film A on Monday, B on Tuesday, A again on Wednesday, B on Thursday, C on Friday, A on Saturday, and A, B and C on Sunday. It takes all your time to find out what's on. To cope with this situation the manager goes round daily posting up the bills advertising the show for that night. As for the films themselves, they have been mostly American products since I have been here. Last Sunday, for example, at 3 o'clock, there was *Young Tom Edison*, *Edison the Man* at 6 o'clock, and at 9 o'clock *Western Union*.

Arbitrary Cuts

Others I have seen were *Escape to Happiness*, which I enjoyed very much; *Hotel for Women*, which I thought—not so hot! For the rest we have had *Victory*, *Lady Hamilton*, *Sun Valley Serenade*, *Bitter Sweet*, and so forth. One bright spot for me was a second viewing of *49th Parallel* or *The Invaders*, as the American version is termed, but the American company distributing it had messed around here and there. For instance, Leslie Howard's speech: "So you are Nazis" in the noteworthy sequence had been entirely cut. Raymond Massey's dialogue: "We have a right to be fed up with anything we damn well please," had been very obviously dubbed to—"anything we blame please," thereby ruining the entire effect of the line. Its funny the way the Americans seem so touchy on this language business. They can stand loads of sex and muck but a bit of downright good healthy swearing seems to scare 'em to death!

Of course, *Gone with the Wind* turned up. It ran four weeks at the Gamba-Bio in Reykjavik (which as the capital city by the way has three cinemas, including one which caters for Forces only) and prices went up the same as elsewhere to 4s. 6d. and 7s. 6d.—good old M.G.M. with their "ars gratia artis" stuff!

I queued for an hour to book seats, and a crowd of us went to see it, mostly for at least the second time and the third in my case. It was uncut with no sub-titles and there was an interval of 15 minutes half-way through—but not in the right place. You will remember the point in the film where provision is made for a break; something like—"As God is my witness—if I have to steal, if I have to lie, if I have to cheat, if I have to kill—as God is my witness, I'll never go hungry again," followed by that snappy truck shot away from the hill, setting sun, etc. Well, this being Iceland, they couldn't cut the film there, but instead they had to have the break immediately before the scene where Ashby Wilkes returns home from the war; an entirely illogical and unsuitable spot.

News Reels

I have seen one Gaumont News since I came here; all the rest have been American (Pathé and United news reels). We used to kick up a fuss about our news-reels at home sometimes, but I think that they are far better than the American efforts I have seen so far, which are like the American news bulletins—short and snappy. Each item getting about 30 seconds or less. And, of course, a wildly enthusiastic commentator, slinging adjectives right and left. I apologise to our Ally, but I prefer Leslie Mitchell any day.

Don't get the idea that I am "browned off" with our film facilities here; on the contrary, we all appreciate them very much, but in future I shan't be quite so ready to complain to our local Gaumont manager about the way he puts his shows across. If it were not for the movies, indeed, I think we would all go "nuts" from sheer boredom; you certainly realise their value in wartime when you are on overseas service.

South African Cinema

*By T. Gutsche, Film Adviser, South
African Bureau of Information*

LONG BACKWARD in the manifold uses of the film as practised overseas, South Africa is slowly beginning to exploit the cinema for war and other purposes. Prime mover in a production field necessarily limited by the Union's small population, the Government has actively exploited the commercial cinema for propaganda and recruiting reasons. Its camera-men with the troops in North Africa maintain a flow of news-reel material and local production companies are kept busy with shorts mostly for domestic consumption (*Take up the Torch, Heritage, Fall In, Who, Me?* etc.)

In the 16 mm. field, the Film Division attached to the Department of Education which, prior to the war, supplied cultural and educational needs, has lent its facilities and machinery to the Army Film Unit, which apart from producing instructional films for troops, organises shows in camps and supports lectures with suitable information films. In civilian spheres the 16 mm. film can hardly be said to have advanced very much, largely owing to difficulties of supply in stock and chemicals. A few Russian films find their way to the Union and are shown by interested bodies such as the Friends of the Soviet Union; and public exhibitions of films of particular interest are organised by bodies such as the Transvaal Workers' Educational Association and the Transvaal Amateur Film Society. Cine clubs, never an outstanding success in South Africa,

have almost ceased to exist and the Film Society, as it is known overseas, has never obtained a foothold. (Even during peacetime, the absence of Film Societies imparting and showing Continental productions was deeply deplored.)

Natives and Films

One of the most interesting advances in the use of the cinema in South Africa has been the increasing extent to which it is being used among the native population. The silent film was early exploited as a means of recruiting native labour for the gold mines and, with the added stimulus of continuous touring shows organised by the Tea Market Expansion Bureau, the natives in the territories became enthusiastic film fans (sometimes walking ten and twenty miles between villages to see the same show again). In the mine compounds of the Witwatersrand, enormous audiences of natives patronise the free entertainment shows given by a central body operating for all the gold-mining concerns. In this alone, the film plays a most valuable part and the police have have paid generous tribute to its crime-reducing influence. Equally important is the "prevention-of-accidents" propaganda specially contrived for native audiences. Numerous films have been made, the last being *Pas Op, Wena!* (Look Out, You) which surmounts the language difficulty by forthright and impressive photography.

Other types of propaganda film have also been made for the Union's huge native population. Pioneering work has been done by the South African Red Cross Society working in conjunction with the Department of Public Health, which has sponsored the production of several films, notably *The Two Brothers* to combat syphilis, and a series of health films to combat malnutrition, etc. The Government has also recently completed *Ayihlome*, a native recruiting film which has been shown with outstanding success throughout the Union.

National Unity

In these and other respects, the film is serving a valuable purpose in South Africa; but by far its greatest service, both now and for the future, lies in its developing a sense of unified nationhood. The cinema has always been known in South Africa as an overseas or English institution. Even in silent days, captions were never translated into Afrikaans and only recently have talkie films been made locally in both languages. An unbroken diet of English-and American-sounded films tended to breed in the local public both a sense of their own inferiority and a feeling that everything good or valuable must come from overseas. Reaction from this state of affairs has come from two quarters, official and private.

The only newsreel made in South Africa is the *African Mirror*, produced and published by African Film Productions Ltd. Commentated in English, this newsreel has had almost thirty years of meritorious history and has become a well-established institution. With the co-operation of its makers, the Government now issues a monthly digest of "Mirror" items sounded in Afrikaans and entitled *Nuus van Orals* (News from Everywhere) which maintains the widespread popularity that greeted its

first issue. A monthly digest is also made of official newsreel material from the North entitled *Met Ons Manne in die Noorde* (With Our Men in the North), which is equally popular. Both these news-magazines, which are of excellent quality, have done much to break down the prevalent *fastidium rerum domesticorum* and to inculcate the unity of national spirit. The Government has also made a policy of issuing all its productions in both languages and of sounding in Afrikaans any overseas information short of outstanding interest or topicality.

Home Production

While the film is thus being used as a unifying agent in South Africa, it is also being exploited for more individual ends. The Centenary Celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938 saw the birth of a fiercely individualistic spirit which sought to give the greatest possible expression to the Afrikaner and his ideals. The efforts of amateur cinematographers were co-ordinated into a single organisation called RARO (Reddingsdaadbond-Amateur-Rolprent-Organisasie) and a commercial company VOBİ (Volksbioskope) was founded to arrange the distribution of 16 mm. films in cinemas patronised by Afrikaner audiences. VOBİ is also a production concern and recently released its first full-length film *Die Lig van die Eeu* (The Light of the Century) which celebrates the centenary in South Africa of the Dutch Reformed Church. This film is being shown by touring vans throughout the Union. Further films of cultural and historical interest are contemplated but the shortage of stock, chemicals, etc., hampers the development of these earlier plans.

The outbreak of war saw the immediate founding of an organisation called the Union Unity Truth Service which aimed at refuting the subversive

propaganda issued by Zeesen and other sources and to which "Plateland" or country people were peculiarly susceptible. Some months later, a film section was formed whose staff included Henry Cornelius, at one time associated with Sir Alexander Korda (he edited *The Lion has Wings*, *Four Feathers*, etc.) and Leon Schauder, a young South African whose enterprising production of a number of shorts for Gaumont British had succeeded in putting South Africa on the overseas screen. The Union Unity Truth Service, predominantly a political organisation, produces and shows

throughout the Union by touring vans a number of 16 mm. films of interesting ideological content. Their first production was *Noordwaarts* (Northwards), followed by *Trekkees* (the Trekking Spirit), *Oorlog in die Woestyn* (War in the Desert), and a number of shorts including a poetic requiem entitled *Sidi Rezegh*. All these films are sounded in Afrikaans and their continual showing has undoubtedly done much to develop and to familiarise the country public with the idea of a South African cinema as distinct from the previously perpetual overseas film.

A Course in Film Appreciation

by S. H. V. ARGENT

FOR FIFTEEN years the Lancashire Education Committee has been running a rural adult education scheme, but it has only just held its first film appreciation course.

The course was conceived on academic lines, but the pressure of the members' attitude turned it at first from film lectures to film exhibition. Adult education must not be dull. Besides, experience is a good foundation for learning. So we started with films as entertainment. Later we experienced them as art. Finally we studied them.

Even at first there had to be some talking, though it might be no more than a few remarks to introduce a film. As the course proceeded the students began to talk. Their discussion turned spontaneously to the personal and social relations of the film characters, but a little leadership got them to consider film form too. Within this category their first interest was acting,

then sound, then cutting and the use of the camera, and finally pictorial composition. It is interesting that they seemed least aware of the "pictures" as pictures.

The course began with some early actualities. These were received with delight, not because they were primitive art, but because they showed demoded times. This was a lesson for the tutor. He should not have needed it, for he would not have taught literary appreciation by starting with Chaucer. Early Westerns, however, presented no difficulties, for they were born grown-up, and it is significant that we began and finished the course with a Western. Films of the late silent period were also received early on with appreciation, a tribute to their maturity. If their reception typifies what would happen elsewhere, it is important, for silent projectors are easier to come by than sound, and there is a fair number of borrowable silent films.

By the time an attitude of study had been created, early films were welcomed, especially for their help in tracing the development of film acting. Here the key question was, "How would he tell her?" In very early films he mimed it, later he grimaced it, still later—in the close-ups of the late silent film—he under-acted it, and finally spoke it. The unprofessional acting of documentaries led to the detection of a directing mind off-stage, and we got some amusement in trying to catch out unprofessional glances at the camera. When we saw them coming we soon learnt to expect a cut. It usually came.

Commentary

There are certain resemblances between a commentator and an actor, and we next turned our attention to the commentary. Somebody objected to a commentary so insistent that sound and vision had to battle for attention. Julian Huxley talks like this in *Enough to Eat*. This is not a good film as a work of art, but we found that bad workmanship taught us a lot about good. Somebody else objected to Huxley being seen; a commentator should be heard only. Then came a demand for films to tell their own story: commentators should not even be heard. But we saw that this austere doctrine must needs be limited for instructional purposes.

We passed to sound in general, to impersonal backgrounds of prose, verse, music, and natural sound. We considered sound as alternative to visual image, as emotional atmosphere, as continuity. The subject was enriched by our realisation that visual elements are cast in musical form. There is often a symphonic statement of themes, then their development, and then their recapitulation.

As recapitulation is based on the rapid juxtaposition of shots, it provided a useful demonstration of cutting. Another aid to appreciating cutting

was the comparison of earlier silent and later sound versions of the same documentary, e.g., *Cathedrals of England* and *For All Eternity*. The latter has shorter but more shots. We wondered if the new material had been taken at the time of the original making and discarded in the cutting room. The most memorable part of our study of cutting was the exhibition of sequences from the great Russian silent films. These made clear the nature of cutting for emotional contrast as distinct from cutting to continue the narrative. After this we were able to look successfully for less obtrusive examples of emotive cutting in other films, and to discuss whether a specific shot was put in for an emotive or a narrative purpose.

Composition

One of the least satisfactory sections of the course was about pictorial composition. It is difficult to deal with one art in terms of another, of pictures in terms of words. And it may be that this film group was not susceptible to pictorial beauty, though I am not sure. But a manifest difficulty was that we had no stills either for projection or circulation. Large reproductions of famous paintings were used to exemplify design in general, and blackboard diagrams were drawn to anticipate or recall the design of particular shots. A more cinematic aid was the projection of films about stationary things, like the buildings in *Architects of England*, and of films with sustained panoramas.

At the end of the course a member told the writer that she had been going to the cinema for many years but that she had never realised that she was looking at art and at an essentially modern art. So in her case the course had achieved its object of forming an attitude. Informing that attitude will it is hoped be the work of further courses.

A Letter to Oliver Bell

In which Keith F. Bean, one of the reviewers for the "Monthly Film Bulletin", reconsidering the quarter's films indulges some heartsearching on films for children, seeks guidance, and poses the proposition that you don't develop the teeth or the stomach to tackle beefsteak by sticking to a diet of slops.

Dear O.B.,—Every week in Britain and America about fifteen million of tomorrow's adult filmgoers—tomorrow's world-makers—go to the pictures. Every week I face the responsibility of deciding what feature films to urge upon them, or at least some of them. To some variable extent about fifteen million parents, teachers, social workers, critics and others also face it.

The basis of my decision is my interpretation of the B.F.I. Monthly Film Bulletin criteria: Firstly, films to which children between seven and fourteen can be sent without danger of any real harm, and, secondly, films definitely recommended for children between seven and fourteen: It is, I believe, a basis in general widely accepted and, of course, based on extensive investigation and expert discussion. It is therefore a basis on which I will continue to work.

But just as to the most devout believer come moments of doubt, so there come questionings to my mind.

That may be some excuse for my brashness.

Further excuse is that the pundits themselves are not unanimous. Compare the sweeping severity of van Staveren's conclusions and the far more cautious statements of the Payne Fund investigators. The pundits, moreover, are not infallible. A pertinent, if not completely fair, example is found in the blitz-time homes (with psychiatrists and alienists all lined up) opened for neurotic children and never used. The children were more interested than scared and took fright

mainly sympathetically, from the presence of frightened adults.

The patient, painstaking research of the experts is building an ever-richer store of knowledge. But at present two considerations are important. The first is that statistically derived evidence is a wayward wench exercising her will-o'-the-wisp wiles on none more wantonly than the honest worker in child psychology. The second is a tendency, not among the scientists but among their disciples and interpreters, to enunciate, repeat and elaborate dicta for which there is little or no scientific evidence. Then each of these unscientific commentators extends his fellow's ill-founded conclusions, appearing to give them greater weight but in reality achieving nothing more than Fabre's caterpillars—you remember, following each other, head to tail, around the pot-plant rim until they died of starvation although their food was never further away than the centre of the pot-plant.

But to return to films for children. Fright is, in fact, the problem most widely recognised—and most frightening to adult commentators. Runs one extensively held argument: "Films can frighten children. This is undesirable. Therefore children should not see any film which may frighten them."

Doesn't this cut right across the modern medical tenet that fears can be cured by education? If a child is frightened of the dark, how many experts nowadays would advise never leaving it in darkness? Don't we rather set out to educate it to the idea that there is nothing to fear? Consider the

case of the child not so educated, the child whose fear is actually encouraged by the fact that it is never left in darkness. What devastating effects may not result when suddenly and inescapably it some time finds itself alone in the dark? That can happen. And it is not hard to call up a dozen analogous situations which can arise in childhood and adolescence where problems baulked and pre-education shirked or shelved because difficult or unpleasant may well spell tragedy.

If there is one other principle more widely agreed than most it is that children should not be shown films which will be difficult for them to follow, that we must give them films which will not puzzle them or bore them. Isn't this a very good principle which we are apt to carry too far? And isn't it one also which can be positively met—again with education? We have the evidence of educationists who have often found how a visit to a fictional film aids classroom study of a related subject. But we also have their evidence of how much more the children get out of such a film if they have already begun classroom study of its subject—with one example, I recall, where the film had been practically forgotten by the time classroom study of its subject came up six months later. We have, further, evidence that teachers who have learned the aid of film in education are willing to bring education to the aid of film—to encourage not only a better comprehension of subject matter but also better understanding and appreciation of the films as films.

Russian children's cinema centres sought to exploit both these ideas by introducing a film with talks, music, literary readings and even stage performances on related subject matter and by talks, demonstrations and exhibitions on film-making.

Isn't all this a sign-post to the land of vast and very little exploited oppor-

tunity in making the cinema more valuable to children and, through their demand for better films, children more valuable to the cinema?

If these two negatives—fright and puzzlement or boredom—can be beaten thus, it will mean more good films positively recommended for children. That very extension of the field will emphasise the need, already evident, for greater and more constant guidance of the children in their assessment of the qualities and the events in films.

Already evident. . . . Take this quarter's films. Of 115 feature films considered, 16 were definitely recommended for children, and a further 42 were ranked in the "no real harm" class. But I look at some of these films and ask myself whether I am not helping to bring children up cinematically moronic—which means artistically dead since cinema is practically the only artistic development for large sections of the population?

Unless we reject conceptions of progress in art and of ever-widening capacity for appreciation as the best means of fostering it, don't I face two awkward questions?

The questions: Am I recommending or not rejecting dangerous tosh? Am I rejecting or discouraging children from seeing material which has true value for them?

Not for a moment are the two questions posed on grounds solely of the interests of film art or even of its artistic appreciation. They apply equally and in the same words exactly in considering the emotional and mental development of the child.

Some of the qualities in these films: Cheap unlovely romance, dishonest psychology, knockabout comedy at anybody's expense, tawdry music, worthless braggadocio, a hash of social half-truths and, particularly in the westerns, an entirely unrealistic

idea that justice always triumphs and virtue gains inevitable reward.

Tough Diet

Is this the nourishment to build the health and vigour which the young mind requires if it is to meet and master its problems of tomorrow—or even of later today? They are big problems (mental, emotional, physical) of civic responsibility, of sex and other personal relationships, of communal and individual justice, of self-direction on a chosen path. Can we not provide a diet which will build a tougher, less hot-house psychology, a wider, deeper knowledge of life and a freer, franker approach to its problems?

Before birth a child is a habit-forming creature, able to learn through conditioning. By the age of seven or eight a child is capable of conceptual judgment and reasoning. Simple facts—but perhaps they should be more frequently re-stated. They embolden me to tell you some of the quarter's films I would like to see positively recommended for children and to give some of the points I would like to make were I the teacher, parent, group leader or friend helping the children through to get the fullest out of each film, technically and artistically, subjectively and socially.

First of all I would show them *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (with a fifteen-minute interval half way to rest the young minds). They would miss much of it if only because in parts it is cut to a speed to tax adult assimilation and in other parts clarity in dialogue has been sacrificed for naturalness. But they would see how, in the hands of two so thoughtful and thorough as Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, every department can be wooed for its maximum contribution. I remember no film which so exemplified this essential teamwork or where so many departments reached such high standards. There are hundreds of

points to illustrate this achievement. Here I must be content with one point—how Deborah Kerr not only creates three distinct personalities but also, in each, suggests the period character, the outlook and deportment of all the women of the time. Of the message of *Blimp*: The slow unadaptability of our hero is glossed with endearing qualities but at least the point is made that there can be no rule but ruthlessness in dealing with an enemy of society. It is a basic lesson, important to peace as to war.

And Politics

That is why—despite or disregarding, if you will, the political background—I would show the children *Lenin in 1918*. It teaches this same hard fundamental truth. It also contains some extraordinarily fine acting, Shchukin particularly getting right into the heart and mind of the Lenin he portrays. This film shows a wounded man deliberately shot through the heart at pointblank pistol range. I am told that this sort of thing is not for children. But this sort of thing happens, particularly in war, and had the children and adolescents of yesterwar learned more of it, I wonder whether we would have had such a lethargic electorate in the thirties. You don't develop the teeth and the stomach to deal with beef steaks by sticking to a diet of slops. And, in any case, I am assuming that with this more positive approach to the "tougher" films there would also be greater efforts to see that wise counsel was at hand to provide the philosophical background, to keep the focus and perspective true.

Given that, I would show the children *The Moon Is Down*, *Commandos Strike at Dawn* and even *Hangmen Also Die*, not because these films are technically a cut above their class (which they are) but that the children may know that patriots—poet and peasant, professor and plumber—also

die. That the children may know . . . That they may know that an *Assignment in Brittany* is more than a collection of postcards of a fancy-dress ball. That they may know that nations do not come through the *Edge of Darkness* simply by rallying to the pasteboard heroics of an Errol Flynn or a *Mademoiselle France* or a circus troop of *Chetniks*.

Still, in this fourth quarter of this fourth year of war, we hear people who say, "If we must have war films——". At a time when war is the ever-present mental, emotional and physical focus of effort for millions, there is still this head-in-sand refusal to admit that war, right now, is the norm—and has been for eight of the last thirty years.

Don't Delude Children

Let us not lead the children into similar delusion—nor hide from them the waste and frustration, the devastation and massacre that war is. Let us bring them soberly to the truth and then, without shirking any of the implications, we can show them important films—the stark clarity of *The Story of Stalingrad*, the artistic intensity of *The Silent Village*, the spiritual depth and beauty of *Greek Testament*, the informative sincerity of *The Gentle Sex*.

These I would show them for technical and artistic interest as well as for content. Particularly, too, I would show them *We Dive at Dawn*, which, since the comparison is almost inevitable, I rank above *In Which We Serve*, both in efficiency of statement and in unhackneyed veracity. The children will not notice the "cuss words" in this Asquith work, and for most of this technically minded generation the handling and operation of the submarine should be a fascinating subject.

The same applies to *Air Force*, dramatically worthless but technically a triumph in its genre. For the children

I would turn it into a serial which incidentally would dilute the absurd piling-on of heroics. It would be just as interesting as the cheapjack aviation serials they have now and far more valuable to them.

Of the non-war films, *Keeper of the Flame* and *Hello, Frisco, Hello*, are two which I would show to those children most interested and most forward in film assessment—the first for its fine direction, camera, lighting, acting, and the second for its colour. It is not of the "unobtrusive" colour school followed with outstanding success in *Colonel Blimp*; but in the "conscious" colour school, it is the best we have had since *Blood and Sand*.

A well-made documentary, *World of Plenty*, brought a fresh discussionary style to the important food aspect of post-war planning. We can use more of such. For the rest, the quarter provided its quota of efficient fictional work but none of it of particular appeal for the children and none—not even *Cabin in the Sky* or *La Fin du Jour*—important enough otherwise to warrant their special attention.

No, the important things were the heavier fare, and so I have raised them.

False Witness

There seems to me no crime more culpable than false witness to the children. It is the first step to the undermining, misinforming, flaunting and exploiting of the people. That sort of thing led to revolution in Russia, to dictatorship in Germany, to Munich and inevitably then to the enslavement of Europe and the whole global holocaust.

Is it not our first duty, alike to society, to art and to the children as individuals, to see that they are aided by every possible means to the contemplation of such things as exist in beauty, strength and, above all, truth? Isn't this the way to eliminate the

tawdry and the gimcrack, to destroy dishonest doctrine and banish ugliness and evil?

Said Schiller: "The adult would be a genius if he but lived up to the promise of childhood."

Said Yale's professor of child

hygiene, Arnold Gesell: "Sincerity, directness, originality, naïve freedom from inhibition, vitality and happiness are the characteristics of childhood at its best, and the mental health of the race depends on an increasing projection of these qualities into maturity."

FILMS FOR AFRICANS

Reprinted by permission from "Colonial Cinema"

THE OBJECT of the British Colonial Film Unit, like that of every branch of British Colonial administration, is to raise the primitive African to a higher standard of culture.

Apart from broadcasting, the benefits of which are confined to the few with receiving sets, the cinema is the only modern invention through which large numbers of Africans can be effectively influenced. The main obstacles to the development of its range and power are those of organisation and distribution. Modern equipment, therefore, must replace the present cinema van. The ideal must be a static cinema in every village, with programmes in frequent circulation.

The African, though illiterate, is by no means unintelligent; and this must be fully appreciated if the most satisfactory approach is to be discovered. The simple screen technique which has been evolved is founded upon careful observation undertaken in the earlier stages of film shows. On the basis of this work, certain experiments were carried out, and now reports by responsible officials abroad confirm the belief that our films undoubtedly attain their purpose and justify their production in accordance with the new method. The records of the Unit are being continually enriched by information about the reactions of African audiences; this information, so essential to the successful work of the Unit, will be slowly and surely supple-

mented by carefully compiled questionnaires to be sent out to a wide circle of observers.

The salient principles of this specialised production are simple. The first object is to gain the attention of the audience. Though the novelty of the moving picture may command a fleeting attention, it will be maintained only by a technique which is skilfully related to the psychology of the African. Photographic clarity is essential. Tone values must be true, image shapes and patterns needle sharp. Clarity of subject is equally important; there must be one fundamental idea only in each film. Conventional tricks like "panning shots", "dolly shots" and others, used in modern films to short-circuit time and space will certainly create confusion in the minds of an illiterate audience. The "fade" is, in fact, the only technical subterfuge which can be used with safety. The question of camera angles is just as vital. Shots should be made from a viewpoint that is normal: bird's eye or worm's eye views should be rigidly eschewed since, for the African, they simply obliterate understanding of the content of the scene. It is no less necessary that visual continuity from scene to scene should be sustained. Every new shot without a visual link with its predecessor starts another train of thought which may exclude everything that has gone before. More sophisticated audiences have been educated to

a surprising mental agility in connecting up dimly related flashes. But to the illiterate such a technique leads to utter confusion; their minds are not sufficiently versatile to comprehend these swift and sudden changes. For the same reason, each scene should be longer than is usual for educated audiences. More time must be allowed to follow the sequences of visual images, to read them aright and to benefit by their proper understanding.

The ideas which inspire this technique are neither new nor mysterious. Essentially didactic in approach, beginning with the known and passing by gradual stages to the unknown, they may be said to be as old as Socrates.

Besides being a powerful weapon for the gradual elimination of adult illiteracy, the cinema can be a medium promoting that better social under-

standing which must be the basis of post-war reconstruction. The scope of the educational film is almost unlimited. It can be used to impart vital knowledge in such subjects as agriculture and hygiene. Its propaganda value is high; the right type of film should help to promote goodwill between governors and governed and can be the means of combating swiftly and efficiently subversive propaganda by the dissemination of truth.

If the real aim of education is borne in mind during these early days of film production, there will be few reasons to regret the introduction of the cinema to African audiences. There will be none of the unfortunate consequences which have followed the promiscuous presentation of unsuitable films to illiterates in some other parts of the world.

A Technical School Film Society

by R. W. WILSON, B.Sc.

The school is called the Cambridge-shire Technical School, and, in the words of its prospectus, "is organised to meet the industrial, commercial and general aesthetic needs of Cambridge and the County." It is a typical Technical Institution, with a large adolescent and adult population in the evenings. It aims to liberalise vocational training, and this aim is assisted by the development which is taking place in the growth of recreational and social activities of various kinds.

The school possesses a 16 millimetre silent projector normally kept in a lecture room capable of seating up to 120 people.

Interest in the possibilities of a Film Society arose out of a talk given by the writer to the School Debating Society

and Discussion Group. The talk was the outcome of his personal interest in the film as a visual aid in education, and as an art form, and was entitled: "The Story of the Silent Cinema," illustrated by National Film Library films. The treatment was a combination of the historic, the technical and the aesthetic, and showed the evolution of the cinema from its music-hall embryo to the stage of the silent feature-film. The audience consisted largely of technical, commercial and art students of about 18 years of age, and their interest in silent films (which, of course, they had rarely, if ever, seen in the popular cinema), was very evident. The "atmosphere" of the period of each film was captured as far as possible by suitable records played

on the radio-gramophone. As a result adult members of the audience were given the opportunity of living over again their early cinema experiences.

A meeting was subsequently held to discuss the functions of a Film Society—what it could be and do. It was pointed out, amongst other things, that a Film Society could show the films it wanted to see (within the limits of the projection apparatus), could study the technique of film making, and lead its members to differentiate between seeing films and “going to the movies”. A band of enthusiastic students decided to form a Society, and to levy a subscription of one shilling for membership so that an immediate start could be made.

Meetings

Meetings of the Society have been of two kinds—Members’ Meetings for discussions and special talks, and Open Meetings for the showing of films to non-members as well as to members. Non-members are admitted to temporary membership for open meetings on payment of a small charge, usually sixpence, which has so far defrayed expenses. The Society is in this way self-supporting.

The first open meeting was devoted to the early work of Charles Chaplin under the main heading: “The Man Who Made ‘The Dictator’.” This was followed a few weeks later by the full-length version of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Audiences of approximately 60 were present at each of these meetings, which, it must be remembered, could only be held after classes had finished at 8.45 p.m., and which were, therefore, not over until long after bus services had ceased to run.

The Society has had several members’ meetings to decide policy, discuss films, and show documentaries, and the keener members are learning

how to use the projector. Among its aims are the holding of joint meetings with other societies in the school, such as the Building Students’ and Engineering Societies, for the purpose of showing films of special interest to those societies. For example, a recent documentary programme included films on timber and its applications, and the Building Students’ Society was invited to be present.

This development has taken place in the space of about four months. Supporters of the Film Society are clearly interested in the film apart from its mass entertainment appeal, and it is felt that the Society is fostering film appreciation in an effective, if informal, way.

Other Activities

There are several fairly obvious lines of future development. It seems possible to link up the work of the Debating Society with that of the Film Society in two ways—by using meetings of the Debating Society for discussions on films on topics centred round films shown at Film Society meetings. On the other hand, the Film Society meetings could be used to show programmes illustrating topics under discussion in the Debating Society. This is rendered more easily possible since there is some overlapping of personnel as between membership of the two societies. Moreover, through the medium of the Debating Society, the film as a sociological agency can be presented in much the same way as broadcasting has already been discussed in earlier meetings. Some sort of link-up also seems possible between the activities of the Music and Film Societies.

In this way, there will be fostered between clubs, a bond which is so much more socialising than if activities to attempt to work in “water-tight” compartments.

Retrograde Novelties

A cautionary word *from* B. E. Gillett

WHEN I was a small boy I well remember becoming the proud owner of a "home" model magic lantern, whose illuminant was either a small paraffin lamp or a candle, according to which was the more readily available. Later, as I mastered the elementary details of electricity, these were replaced by a 32-candlepower carbon filament lamp. I remember, too, how far I thought this was an advance on the much more elaborate lantern which we were privileged to see at school on festive occasions, for this had a more efficient, but cumbersome "lime-light" which seemed to require the full-time attention of the operator.

In those days lantern lectures were very rare occurrences to which we looked forward eagerly, and the lantern still seemed to merit the title of "magic", but as time went by they became more frequent and as the twentieth century got into its 'teens and we became more mechanically and electrically minded much of the "magic" disappeared.

I remember, too, seeing my first episcopes show, when, as I recall the sole intention seemed to be to demonstrate its wonders by showing us a watch ticking, a bee walking in a glass case and other things outside the scope of the lantern. Of course everyone hurried to acquire one of these wonders, which because it did something new, must inevitably put the lantern out of business.

These were the modest beginnings of "optical aids" as we know them to-day, and gradually they passed into regular use, ceasing to be novelties as teachers developed methods of using them for teaching rather than for amusement. Years passed and the film

found its way into the schools first in silent version and even before a technique had been evolved, in all its glory, complete with sound. The result, was, all too often, that the lantern was consigned to a top shelf in a cupboard, or, more often, on top of the cupboard, where it was left to become coated with dust in its retirement. It was considered old-fashioned to use apparatus so out-of-date when progress was measured by the amount and variety of new apparatus which a school possessed. Unfortunately, this age is not yet past, for one frequently finds that teachers with no experience of any form of optical apparatus are prepared to *start* by acquiring the latest form of sound apparatus. Not for them the lantern or even the silent projector; the cinema has decreed that "sound" is *the* thing, so "sound" it must be.

What a pity, fancy learning to drive in a racing car, or to fly in a Spitfire. Even supposing one succeeds in handling the machine one loses all sense of perspective and never realises the possibilities and uses of the Austin 7 or the Tiger Moth. When television reappears, the first thought of many schools will be to acquire the necessary apparatus because they will be certain that it is the optical aid of the future, and we shall be told that the film is a thing of the past, no longer useful in the classroom and fit only to share the dust with the lantern. In some cases this is merely an indication of educational snobbery, in others an indication that there are still people who will take up anything new without pausing to think how they can use it, or how it will fit in with their existing methods.

One has only to give the matter a

little thought to realise that this attitude cannot be right. Apparatus which has served a useful purpose cannot suddenly lose its usefulness because something new has come along. The wise teacher is the one who can use all the apparatus at his disposal for the various purposes for which each piece was designed and dovetail them together to get the maximum efficiency out of his teaching. I always feel sorry for both teachers and children in a school which has consigned its lantern to the scrap heap, but which shows you its sound projector to prove that its methods are modern.

Get Out The Lantern

Let us examine the situation anew let us get out all our optical apparatus and discover how and where we can put each piece of it into use. The lantern is still a valuable asset, especially if it is capable of using the more recent developments of 2 inch slides and 35 mm. film strip. Teachers have shown me with justifiable pride how they have adapted their lanterns to show this material, and how they have replaced the old limelight or arc light by a projector lamp*, and are using the lantern to supplement films in addition to the valuable work which it is still able to do by itself. Cellophane slides have also extended the range of usefulness of the lantern.

The episcopes, because it makes use of ordinary printed or pictorial matter, still retains a very important position, and like the lantern is capable of being used both alone and also in conjunction with other instruments and it will often be found useful to throw a map or other illustration on to the wall alongside the screen while a film is being shown, or even on to the black-

* Details for this can be found in the pamphlet "The Design and Construction of School-made Diascopes and Episcopes," published by the British Film Institute, price 9d.

board for tracing round, afterwards inserting details applicable to the task in hand.

Films have extended the range of visual illustration, they have made possible many things which could not be expressed effectively as still pictures, but they do not show us the beauties of architecture any better than can be done with a lantern slide. Why then must we have the expense and elaboration of a sound machine, if equal results can be obtained in some cases by simpler, if older methods.

If I were training teachers in the use of optical apparatus I would insist that no student should touch films until he or she had attained proficiency in teaching with "still" pictures, shown through a lantern, episcopes, film strip, or micro projector.

It also has the advantage of dispelling the all-too-common idea that the film does its own teaching, without the intervention of the teacher. The lantern lecturer acquired a skill in the art of "putting over" his pictures, he invariably read the book of words which accompanied a set of lantern slides, and he knew what was coming next and what he hoped to teach, in addition he seldom tried to show more than one set of slides at a sitting. Too often the film projectionist does little more than project his pictures, he often dispenses with the teaching notes even on the rare occasions when these exist, and he frequently strings several films on entirely different subjects, together to form a "programme".

B.B.C. & B.F.I.

And what of the future? More mechanical devices will undoubtedly come to the aid of the teacher, but have we developed the existing aids to the full? We still have no correlation between films and school broadcasts, much could be done by collaboration between the British Film Institute and the B.B.C. It should be possible for

lists of films† suitable for use in conjunction with school broadcasts to be circulated to schools at the beginning of each term together with the titles of the talks, such films would often make clear points in the talks and would serve as a means of revision or introduction. It may be argued that it is possible under present conditions for the enterprising teacher to find such films but the effort involved and the possibility that the film, when found, will not be suitable, often prevent teachers adopting this course. Another difficulty might be insufficient copies of films to go round, but even this would not prevent much more being done than at present. In my opinion, the present time, with the absence of the valuable pamphlets which used to be available from the B.B.C., is ideal for a preliminary experiment.

Television

Even when television broadcasts for schools become a regular occurrence, it is difficult to believe that more than a small fraction will be "live" broadcasts, and if films are used, it should be possible for them to be made available for individual use for revision purpose where possible.

To sum up, the present is not the time for increasing the amount or variety of apparatus at our disposal in schools. This has its value in that it allows us a breathing space to get away from the "fads" which sweep the educational field, each one replacing its predecessor and in its turn disappearing into the shadows as it ceases to be the "last word" in progress. Should we not use this time to experiment how to get better results by using the apparatus we already possess to better effect. Only thus shall we be ready to put new developments into their correct places.

† The B.F.I. does, in fact, prepare a list of suitable films for each session. Schools are told by the Central Council that this is available on application to 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

To-morrow's Problems

IF WE ARE to avoid the errors of the last post-war years, problems of post-war reconstruction need to be provided for now.

With the object of informing the public on these problems, the Workers' Film Association has prepared a scheme under which they are prepared to provide a programme of films,* either to illustrate lectures or for a full session lasting two hours, on Social Security, Housing and Town Planning, Educational Advance and the Nation's Health.

The leaflet on Social Security, for example, contains a list of 38 films, and although they do not directly illustrate the proposals in the Beveridge Report, they do deal with the problems which the Report seeks to mitigate. The folder entitled "Housing and Town Planning", which contains a list of 20 films, points out that housing is one of the most urgent of post-war problems requiring a good deal of public instruction on the changes necessary if we are to ensure well-planned houses and cities.

Educational Advance is the title of the third folder, and although films on this subject are few and far between, the W.F.A. have contrived by dint of painstaking research to provide a list of no less than 31 films, covering a varied field of interest.

The last leaflet which is in course of preparation is on "The Nation's Health."

* The Workers' Film Association Ltd., of Transport House, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W.1., will be pleased to send full details of the schemes on application, or to send their newly printed Catalogue, provided stamps to the value of 8½d. are sent, as required by the Ministry of Supply Order.

Films and Science

by DEREK STEWART

THE English Scientific Film Association was founded on May 15th, 1943, at a meeting representative of both science and films, convened by the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers. The chairman of the meeting, Mr. Arthur Elton, stated that the increasing demand for, and interest in, scientific films required an organisation independent of all particular interests and devoted solely to furthering the production and use of scientific films.

The aims and limits of E.S.F.A. cannot well be discussed without considering what constitutes a scientific film. Though a final definition must be left to a committee of E.S.F.A. for present purposes it is sufficient to consider a scientific film as any film presenting scientific methods, thought and endeavour, or which treats any subject, theme or social activity and introduces scientific material and background.

The primary aim and basis of the new Association is to promote the national and international use of the scientific film in order to achieve the widest possible appreciation of the scientific outlook. The present time is particularly opportune because this is a war employing the resources of science and the men who fight it have to learn to use technical tools with which they might not otherwise have become acquainted. The film has already been adopted as one of the most satisfactory methods of teaching the use of these complex and unfamiliar types of weapon; however, it is unlikely that these technical films by themselves will have the effect of broadening the appreciation, by the general public, of the outlook of

science. There is indeed a danger that restriction of attention to the purely practical will "short-circuit" that comprehension of the scientific method itself, so vitally necessary for any real social advance.

Apart from certain films exhibited through the Ministry of Information and service film organisations the main scientific film shows are held in universities, colleges, schools and the scientific film societies. It is upon these groups that the English Scientific Film Association is to be built up. The main initial object of its committee will be to increase the showing of scientific films, i.e., to increase the number of scientific film societies and so to increase and improve the production of scientific films.

Under this head comes not only the short instructional type of film, but also the "story" film which treats, in one way or another, of science, or the scientist. Owing to the growth in importance of science this type of film is likely to become more frequent, and the demand for films which present objective thought, rather than pleasant illusions, is growing rapidly enough soon to catch the attention of the commercial producer.

The E.S.F.A. proposes to set up an advisory panel of scientists to give advice on film treatment. Thus it is hoped to stimulate the commercial producer to give in his films a truthful impression of science and scientists, and to discourage the pseudo-scientific film. Let the scientist be presented as a reasonable being, let him by all means have the human qualities of falling in and out of love, but let him no longer be shown in his laboratory as a secretive white-coated recluse seated, im-

pressive, but half a century out of date, behind a bubbling retort.

An example of the demand for scientific films was quoted at the inaugural meeting of the Association; at a free scientific film show in a North London district over 350 people packed the hall and many more were turned away. Those who would pay 7s. 6d. per annum to join a society to give six shows yearly were asked to send in their names. Within three days over 150 applications had been received.

Sources of Science Films

Scientific films come at present from two main sources. The first consists of Government bodies and institutions who produce the films because they have the facilities and feel they are necessary. To increase their output the English Scientific Film Association will support these endeavours in every way possible. The other source of films is rather different; scientists often use films for recording experimental data or for showing a portion of an experiment and these scientific experiment-records are a valuable source of material. Production and distribution of these films is not so difficult as the task of finding them in the odd drawers and cupboards of laboratories all over the country. The collection and correlation of information on these films is not unique to the work of the English Scientific Film Association and must be carried out in conjunction with other bodies, some of whom have already done excellent work in this field.

Together with this general increase in the number of films it is of paramount importance that they should be graded according to scientific merit and suitability for various types of audience. This work is at present carried out by the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers and must be carried out in future on a

much larger scale by the new Association. The organisation and method of working of this viewing panel will need to be devised with considerable care. On the one hand the panel must assess the technical accuracy of every film it sees, and fully qualified scientists must be willing to give their time to this. On the other hand the viewing panel must be qualified to judge the value of films for different audiences—that is to say, the way in which they present those facts. This assessment of film quality is by no means a simple job.

The general information on scientific films thus obtained will be continually increased, filed for reference, and made as widely available as possible. From it the Association will be able to advise on, and book, film programmes for members and affiliated bodies. Work of this type is already being pursued with much energy and success in Scotland, and one of the first duties of the English Scientific Film Association will be to approach the equivalent existing Scottish body with a view to setting up a National Federation representing both interests.

After the war the National Federation will be in a position to contact the Empire and all other countries to arrange an interchange of scientific films and information. Then the Scientific Film will be able to play its full part in bringing about that widespread and international understanding of the basic ideas of science—needed by everybody in the complex world of today.

B.F.I.

Just Published

A SELECT LIST OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS

suitable for Discussion Groups on International, Social and Political Subjects

1s. 6d.

4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.1

A WORD TO FILM-MAKERS

By Arthur Vesselo A.E.C.

IN THE dying twenties, just before the birth of a decade which was to lead the world through growing spiritual to unsurpassed material chaos, an earnest film historian, made rash by youthful enthusiasm, predicted that the film would ultimately take over all branches of education and would, by implication, even supplant the teacher.

As to the first, there are certain branches of education to which the film can never contribute much: they are primarily the fields of abstract and statistical thought.

As for the teachers, they need have no fear. A film cannot vary its pace or its language and increase or decrease the number of its repetitions to suit the wits of different types of class. Nor can a film set and correct homework, or give individual attention to pupils. Education can never be mass-produced through the film or by any other means.

Limitations of Film

Indeed, the danger is not that the film may supplant the teacher, but that the teacher may leave the film to do too much. There is a misconception to be cleared up here. It is popularly thought that because the film is graphic and immediate and is taken in easily, it therefore automatically leaves a strong and lasting impression on the mind. The exact contrary is true. These qualities of the film militate very easily *against* active thought: they put the mind into a semi-hypnotic state, which makes it accept impressions readily but forget them just as readily.

Even in ordinary cinema-going, the number of people who see films without afterwards knowing what they have

been about is phenomenal. With classroom films, where the dramatic attraction is less and the purpose usually more difficult than the vague remembrance of a simple plot, the danger is vastly greater.

The upshot of all this is that the practice of putting on educational films as a little programme of their own in a specially allotted period is a waste of valuable time. They are seen, very superficially assimilated, and forgotten.

Some Criteria

What are the criteria of a teaching-film's value? Roughly these: that it should either (a) cut down the teaching-time necessary to cover a given part of a given subject, or (b) enable the teacher, within the framework of the normal time allotted to a subject, to cover ground which he otherwise could not touch; and that it should not require so much labour and preparatory work to assimilate into the curriculum that it ceases to be worth the teacher's while.

The last point particularly is one which too often escapes the film-makers. A film may be potentially of great value; yet if it calls for numerous rehearsals and long study of teaching notes it may lose all its worth. Teachers are human; and, rightly or wrongly, they feel that films are (or rather should be) made for them, not they for the films. Perhaps this is a somewhat unaccommodating attitude; but it cannot be overcome by being ignored.

Teaching notes are in any case essentially the sign of a makeshift method, which tackles the problem piecemeal instead of as a unity. It is not clear why it should not be possible

to produce closely-knit *series* of films, to be used in combination with textbooks—textbooks either already in being or specially published for the purpose. It is only worth giving the warning that such special textbooks would have to be very conscientiously executed: if they were obviously merely thrown together for the sake of selling the films, they would be worse than useless.

A Suggestion

What of the films themselves in detail? Should they, for instance, be sound or silent? Admittedly, not all cases ask for exactly the same answer; but in very many cases, at least, they should be both at once. They should be deliberately calculated so that the teacher can run them first of all with sound, letting them talk for themselves, and then silent, giving him a chance to talk to and ask questions of his class. Any idea of making films silent purely in order to give the teacher something to do is ridiculous; it simply means more work and certainly more rehearsals.

Teaching makes large use of generalisations: it may not be too much to say that the art of thinking is the art of valid generalisation, and that the art of teaching is the art of communicating the method and the results of such generalisation.

“The west coast of Greece is mountainous”. Suppose we wish to illustrate this apparently quite uncomplicated and concrete idea. Is it enough just to show a few panning-shots of anonymous mountain-peaks? Does this really do anything at all? In point of fact it does next to nothing; for the brief statement, at first sight so simple and concrete, is in reality a huge generalisation, and must be treated as such.

Statements of this sort, if they are to be illustrated on the screen, demand primarily good animated maps and

diagrams: shots of actual scenery, and so forth, are of use only as adjuncts. The film-maker who ignores this warning will fill up his film with bits and pieces of unrelated, disjointed material, ranging far and wide over far too large a field and leaving nothing but a few hazy fragments in the mind; while the background, the most important part, will be missing.

In fact, the teaching film's best foraging ground is the realm of the absolutely specific. A five-minute concentrated exposition of a single place or thing or process or activity or even part of an activity is worth half-an-hour's discursive wanderings.

Lifeless Scenes

Film-makers who realise this sometimes make a different mistake. In shooting, say, a film of a particular place they tend to suppose that what goes into the camera is necessarily the same as what will come out. They forget, or do not realise, that a scene which is actually full of life and character may, if photographed without imagination, appear upon the screen as something lifeless and dull and unmemorable. They forget the absence of colour, of depth, and of the hundred-and-one subtle details of background and atmosphere. In short, they forget the lessons of forty years.

The practising teacher turned film-maker is especially liable to this error. He knows something, no doubt, of the virtues of technique in a fiction film; but he is apt to behave as if these virtues were superfluities in a teaching-film—as if technique were mere ingenious trickery, admissible, no doubt, in entertainment, but out of place in anything more serious.

The truth is that the teaching film needs at least as much technique as the fiction film—perhaps more. It needs the technique of the professional technician combined with the technique of the professional teacher.

Undergraduate Enterprise

LAST AUTUMN a production of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* was run for three nights only at the Torch Theatre in London; to anyone who appreciates the difficulties of staging Elizabethan plays, and who was lucky enough to see this performance, it was a remarkable achievement.

But the success of this venture was due primarily to a young Oxford undergraduate, eighteen-year-old Peter Brook. He not only produced the play but devised the individualities of presentation and treatment that made it such a *tour de force*.

Soon after the good fortune of *Doctor Faustus*, Peter Brook had the idea of filming Laurence Sterne's delightful book, *A Sentimental Journey*. The cinema is the art-medium in which his interest most deeply lies, and having had some studio-experience, he has sufficient knowledge to be able to plan his own production. Again he has chosen material which many consider intractable, but by the use of a revolutionary mimeodramatic technique he has completed a scenario which he believes does justice to Sterne as well as being of considerable cinematic interest.

Sacha Guitry experimented with mimeodrama in *Le Roman d'un Tricheur*, and lesser satellites in Hollywood and elsewhere have made half-hearted attempts to imitate him, but it cannot be said that the essentials of mime have ever been consistently applied through the medium of the film. In this production of *A Sentimental Journey* there will be no dialogue whatsoever; the sound track, apart from the incidental music, chosen from period composers, will consist of a commentary of extracts from the book, spoken by Sterne. The character of Sterne will be played by Frederick

Hurdis; many of the technicians of *Doctor Faustus* will be working on the film set, but for the sake of realism the character-parts will be played, as in the Russian cinema, by ordinary folk selected at random from the pubs and "haunts" of Oxford.

There are two ways of presenting a novel on the screen; either through the comparatively simple process of adaptation, which is mainly selective (*vide* most Hollywood films), or through a translation into the film medium. This involves two considerations: is the result worthy of the original—does it preserve its inherent qualities intact? And is it also able to stand on its own merits as good cinema? In the majority of films the answer is No, because although the adaptation may provide passable entertainment, it bears little resemblance in style or content to the original. The script of *A Sentimental Journey* aims at eliminating this anomaly. The flavour of the original will be preserved by the aural commentary—there will be nothing "written in"—and by presenting an entirely visual form of acting, independent of dialogue, harmonised with its background, and not simply standing out from a series of canvases.

Production of *A Sentimental Journey* will begin in July and continue half-way through August. Peter Brook (who had a year's experience of script writing before he came up to Magdalen) is directing his own script, which will be shot on 16 mm. film. The majority of the scenes are exteriors, and these are all being taken on location in Oxfordshire, where the countryside is perfectly suited to this type of filming. Interiors will be shot in London, after which the film will be edited.

NOTES & NEWS

British Film Institute

Just after the Easter holidays the Institute convened a small informal meeting of representatives of Teachers' Film Groups, each of whom had had practical experience of teaching with films. The meeting discussed the various qualities which should be possessed by projectors designed for educational purposes. One of the interesting conclusions reached was to the effect that three distinct types of apparatus are necessary, namely:

1. A silent projector for general classroom use, but capable of being used also in large lecture rooms and small halls.
2. A sound machine which can be used in classrooms, lecture rooms and small halls. This machine should be of a semi-portable type capable of being used in rural areas where it would be necessary to transport it from school to school.
3. A sound machine of larger dimensions for semi-permanent installation in a projection room of a large hall. The lay-out of this machine should not be cramped by considerations of weight and portability.

A number of practical recommendations were also made on such matters as the standardisation of controls, running speeds, still devices, reverse devices, levelling and tilting, and spool design and construction.

After final approval these suggestions will be forwarded to the manufacturers, many of who are now commencing their first drawings for their peace-time models.

The Governors of the Institute have approached counsel for legal advice about copyright in connection with film strips. The subject is a very tricky one. There is no doubt that many amateurs who make their own film strips, have from time to time unwittingly infringed somebody else's copyright by photographing postcards, book illustrations and so forth for inclusion in their own strips. The full text of the opinion will, if not too long, be published in our next issue.

The Information Department of the Institute has almost finished the preparation of a new list of sociological-documentary films which is intended to be of use to discussion groups in Youth Organisations, Service Units or civilian Adult Education, as well as to the higher forms of secondary schools. It will shortly be available at 1s. 6d. a copy.

Also in the press is the final report of the very successful week-end conference which

the Institute organised in Exeter early in April. The report contains the text of the speeches as well as the findings of the discussion groups on The Film in the Classroom; the Film in Adult Education; Film and Civics; and Film Appreciation. The speeches, it will be recalled, included one on the Film and the Adolescent given by Dr. Macalister Brew, the Education Secretary of the National Council of Girls Clubs, and another on the International Influence of the Film by Dr. Viktor Fischl, head of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Information. This pamphlet, too, is priced at 1s. 6d.

The Governors regret to announce that owing to the impossibility of finding accommodation, they have had to abandon the idea of a week's summer school on Film Appreciation. Steps have been already taken to find a venue for 1944.

National Film Library

The National Film Library Committee has been discussing the possibility of making a short popular film to illustrate the fundamentals of film technique by showing how the mind of the film director (aided by script writer and editor) works in building up a given scene, why he chooses particular camera set-ups and why he assembles them in a particular way. By creating a general interest in this way, it is hoped that many people will then be ready for the more detailed series of films on the different aspects of film appreciation which one day it is hoped the Library will be able to make, using as examples extracts from the films which have been committed to its care. Negotiations for the release of stock are going forward. The demands of the services and other Government Departments however, is so heavy that it is not easy to get any released for any other purpose no matter how worthy.

The Library's technical sub-committee has been considering the ideal form of vault design suitable for reasonably long-term preservation of nitrate film. A first drawing has been prepared by the Library's architect embodying all the ideas suggested by the members of the sub-committee in the light of the experience already gained and also ideas culled from a re-reading of the technical literature on the subject. In order to have space to expand when necessary the Institute has acquired a small extra piece of property next door. At the present rate of growth this area should be sufficient to house the collection for at least the next five or six years.

The chemical testing of old films which

is proceeding at the rate of some 60 films a month, is showing that quite a number of films become unstable under the artificial ageing test. In these cases the Committee has to determine whether the films, most of which were acquired in a somewhat haphazard manner in the early days of the Library, are of sufficient intrinsic importance to justify the expense of copying them and thus giving them a further lease of life. Improvements in the method of indexing the contents of the films have been made. A late start having been made it will take several years before the index is complete.

Scottish Film Council

This spring has seen continuing interest in film work in Scotland. Most Film Societies report another successful year, this despite increasing difficulties in the matter of obtaining film programmes. One minor storm in a teacup has revolved round the showing in Edinburgh of the film *Royal Mile*. This film has apparently not satisfied the film enthusiasts of Edinburgh.

Scientific film societies have also had an active and busy season and are now settling down to a very active existence indeed. They are, of course, very severely handicapped by limitation of films of a type suitable for their audiences, but they have been most active and helpful in every way where scientific films could be used.

The Educational Film Association has continued its process of revival; in Ayrshire members have, despite war-time difficulties, been able to go on producing educational films. In other centres increasingly active interest has been taken in meetings where educational film matters were discussed, while the various research committees, particularly the Sound Investigation Committee, still carries on very active work.

The Scottish Film Council itself has been carrying on with its routine activities and is steadily increasing its range. In addition to its previous commitments the Library is now co-operating with the A.T.C. in Scotland to distribute their films. While the use of these films in Scotland is limited to some extent by the scarcity of projectors, it is very heartening to see that the distribution of non-theatrical films is still largely being kept within the one sphere of influence, thus preventing the overlapping and competition which would undoubtedly be a severe handicap at this stage.

In the wider sphere of their activity the Scottish Film Council has also been active and working with the Film Association they have even taken an increasing interest in the use of the cinema with adolescent

audiences. A committee is now busy preparing a syllabus of training for Club Leaders, and it is hoped that this will be published at an early date.

Manchester Film Institute Society

Manchester and District Film Institute Society arranged a short series of events in May and June at the College of Technology. The programmes were grouped round three subjects. On May 15th, Mr. Bulleid, author of "Trick Effects with a Ciné-Camera", showed *Metropolis* to an interested audience and traced some notable characteristics of Fritz Lang's work from his early Wagner representations up to recent productions such as *Manhunt* and *Fury*. In early June Mr. Maddison, our former secretary, came over from Leeds to talk on 'Realism and Fantasy in the Cinema'. The lecture was illustrated by three films, *Summer on the Farm* (a recent M.O.I. documentary with many of its scenes laid in Manchester and district), *L'Idée*, the most intellectual and fascinating of trick films, and *Listen to Britain*, Humphrey Jennings's impressionist study of *The Music of a People at War*. In the discussion which followed Mr. Maddison revealed himself as an uncompromising adherent of the realist approach to cinema. On June 26th the Society met to study *Housing Problems*, *Kensal House*, *New Towns for Old*, and *The Londoners*, with special reference to post-war planning. Mrs. Rothwell, M.Sc., J.P., Chairman and founder of the Salford Public Utilities Society, outlined for us the main difficulties to be resolved and commented on how far these films assisted towards a solution.

On July 5th the Annual General Meeting was held at British Council House. Owing to the resignation in December last of Mr. J. H. Black, our honorary secretary, Miss Catherine S. Brown and Dr. Luis Meana were appointed jointly to fill this office. Apart from this change, officers and members of committee who had served during the past year were re-elected with two additions to the committee. The business meeting was followed by a programme of recent documentaries arranged by the Regional Films Officer of the M.O.I.

In collaboration with the University Extra-Mural Department we have arranged a Film Week-end on July 10th and 11th at the Adult Educational Hostel, the Lamb Guildhouse, Bowdon, Cheshire. Films and discussion will occupy most of the time.

Merseyside Film Institute Society

The Society paid a visit at the end of April to the Liverpool Playhouse to see the Old Vic production of *The Seagull*, and to

take part in the discussion led by Mr. Tyrone Guthrie which was attended by Nova Pilbeam and other members of the Old Vic Company.

Sir Edward Villiers, of the Ministry of Information, visited the Society on May 4th, and lectured on the overseas work of the films division of the Ministry. His lecture was illustrated with shorts specially produced for native audiences.

Three additional film shows have been held at the Philharmonic Hall. On June 1st *Le Drame de Shanghai* supported by *Common Cause*, *Chinese War Songs*, and the March of Time's *China Fights Back* were presented at a show in aid of the United Aid to China Fund. On June 22nd the main film was *Derrière la Facade*, which was keenly appreciated, and the shorts included *A Child Went Forth* and *C.E.M.A.* A further show in aid of the United Aid to China Fund was arranged on July 6th, when *We Dive at Dawn* was shown for the first time outside London. Mr. John Mills, who plays a leading part in the film, attended the performance and addressed the audience. The results of both the China Aid shows were very gratifying. The June show realising over £100 and the more recent one over £200.

In addition, the Society is organising special shows for school children, and on July 21st and 22nd 5,000 children will see a programme of selected shorts at the Philharmonic Hall. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Liverpool have promised to attend one of these performances.

Belfast Film Institute Society

The recently concluded season has been one of the Society's most successful. The features shown were *Remontons les Champs-Elysées*, *We from Kronstadt*, *La Grande Illusion*, *The New Teacher*, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, *Quai des Brumes*, and *Film and Reality*, together with numerous documentaries, experimental shorts and cartoons; and thanks chiefly to the large attendance of visitors and non-members the Hon. Treasurer is very cheerful about the season's results and the prospects for continuing next year.

Nine issues have been published of the Monthly Bulletin of Society news, and criticisms of current releases. Belfast is rather proud to have been able to keep this going during the war.

At the annual general meeting in May, under the chairmanship of our President, Lady Brooke, wife of the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, the committee emphasised the Society's indebtedness to the British Film Institute for their invaluable assistance in matters of film supply and ad-

vice, which alone had enabled the Society to carry on, in spite of the temporary curtailment of purely educational activities. After business, some early Chaplin comedies were shown, to old-time piano accompaniment.

Any readers of *Sight and Sound* who find themselves in Belfast next autumn are invited to contact the Secretary about current activities—A. Arnold, 6 College Green House, College Green, Belfast.

Film Council of the South-West

The routine work of providing film shows and supplying information continues unabated. Films concerned with Agriculture, Medicine, Veterinary Surgery, and Prefabricated Houses have been among those shown. Many local societies indeed now regard the film show as an essential feature of their bigger meetings. Some Adult Education courses are also including films.

Our category of local Associate Members has recently expanded considerably. The B.F.I. Conference held in Exeter in April, in the arrangement of which the Film Council played its part, provided a valuable stimulus. Teachers have been making more frequent enquiries, not only about the educational films available but also about the production of educational films. The Secretary is carrying out an investigation into the factors determining the production of educational films, and hopes, after further discussions with the producers, to issue a report on the matter.

In the Visual Education Department of the University College of the South-West, another year of teacher-training has just ended and another batch of young teachers, trained in the handling of projectors and familiar with the principles of visual education, will shortly be taking up posts.

The Devon and Exeter Film Society had a second successful half season in the spring, and there is every hope of its carrying on for another season.

Film Library of the South-West

During the six months ending 30th June, 1943, the Film Library at Dartington distributed 4,407 reels for the Ministry of Information and 90 reels for the Film Council of the South West. The latter circulation continues to be disappointing, but it is anticipated that the new additions

"NAVY WINGS OF GOLD"

—a thrill for the air-minded, is the latest 16mm. sound film in our Library. Just received from the States it shows the training of U.S. pilots—educational and entertaining.

Send stamp for list of all our 16mm. sound films.

**Balmforth Films, Rydal Mount,
Ruff Lane, Ormskirk, Lancashire**

To Fresh Fields . . .

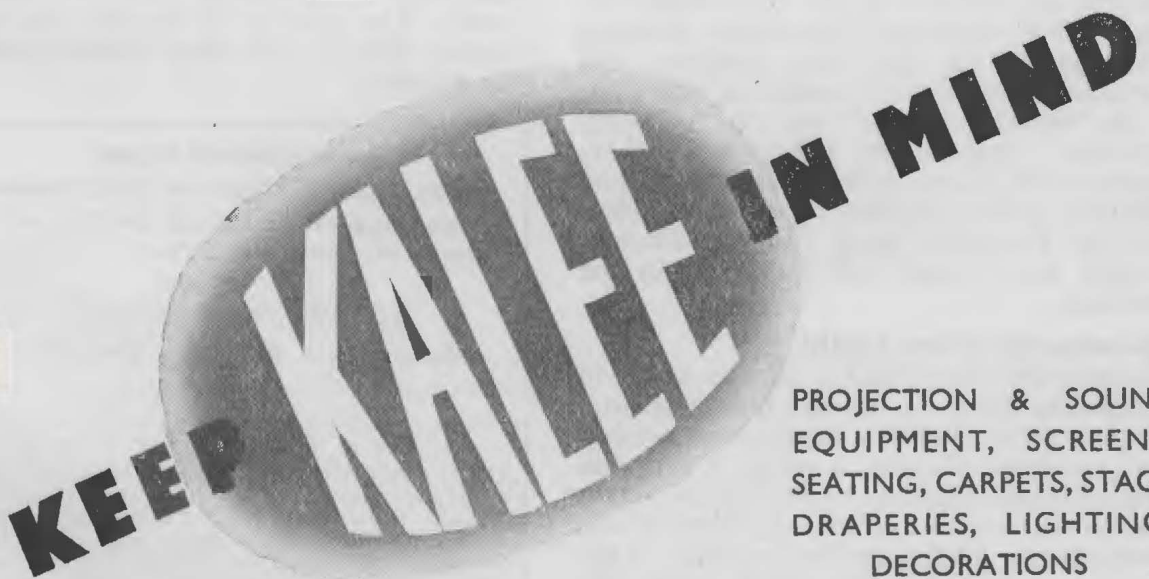
When at last our patient efforts are crowned with victory and peace, the cinema (and in particular the privately sponsored cinema) will have a part of outstanding importance to play in the re-construction of our national life.

Not the least of the problems with which it will be faced is that of discovering an "angle of appeal" which will win the attention and the sympathetic interest of a war weary people.

There can be little doubt that if the appeal chosen follows the lines of some of our present day campaigns, implying that the long suffering British public is composed of amiable half wits who are to be trusted neither with their health, their wealth nor their cigarette-ends, it will fail at the outset and a priceless opportunity will have gone by for ever.

It is our hope as well as our belief that wiser counsels will prevail and that those responsible, forswearing bureaucracy, will use to the full this opportunity for helping towards better things a people which has acquitted itself so nobly in adversity.

And in so far as concerns the technical equipment whereby this helpful message may be conveyed, we, for our part, are determined that apparatus of high quality and truly economical price shall be ready to the hand of those who have this great cause at heart. As the time draws near.



PROJECTION & SOUND
EQUIPMENT, SCREENS,
SEATING, CARPETS, STAGE
DRAPERIES, LIGHTING,
DECORATIONS

KALEE LTD., 60-66 WARDOUR STREET, LONDON, W.1, AND BRANCHES. PHONE: GERRARD 5137
FACTORIES AT LEEDS, LONDON AND HIGH WYCOMBE

being made to the Library will increase its usefulness to schools and other bodies.

The Ministry of Information circulation represents approximately a 50 per cent increase on the same period a year ago. The number of films in the Library is now around 300. The number of projectors being served are now 219 sound and 32 silent. There is no doubt of the valuable and valued work performed by these films. The films differ considerably in merit and popularity, about one-third of the total accounting for well over half the bookings. In confirmation of previous experience the best and most popular films are those dealing with industry and the services; the deservedly least popular are those designed for youth and women's audiences.

Health Films

It is doubtful whether there is any branch of propaganda more difficult to handle than that on venereal disease, but with the production of *Subject for Discussion* (April, 1943) the Central Council for Health Education has shown what may be done in this direction. The film has been taken over by the Ministry of Information as one of its Into Battle series, and has been shown extensively throughout the country.

Earlier in the year the Central Council completed *Young and Healthy*, a fantasy film intended for children up to the ages of eleven and twelve, which teaches in a simple manner the importance of good food, fresh air and plenty of exercise.

Two other films now nearing completion are *Rose in Bud* (colour) and *Unwanted Guests*. The first draws a parallel between the care that must be bestowed upon roses to produce perfect blooms and so too with the child if it is to grow up strong and healthy. The second gives a brief account of the life history of the head-louse, together with methods of treatment stressing particularly the part that combing and brushing can play in combating this pest.

A "slouching walk" and an "ungainly posture", their cause, effects and subsequent cure, these, given a humorous and entirely novel treatment, form the subject of the Council's latest film on *Posture*, which it is hoped will be ready in the autumn.

Edinburgh Film Guild

Edinburgh Film Guild is already active in preparing plans for its fourteenth season. It goes forward with a record membership of just short of 1,000, a series of fourteen programmes regarded as among the best it has given, and undiminished initiative and enthusiasm. At the last performance of the 1942-43 season, held jointly with the British Council in June, a programme of new British Council films was given. Included among the films was *The Royal Mile*

which got a very critical reception from an audience which could judge the film both for its treatment of a unique subject and as a piece of film-making. As a consequence, at the annual meeting a few weeks later, the members protested vigorously against the film as a travesty of its subject, and a resolution was passed calling on the British Council to withdraw the film in its present form and to have it re-made in consultation with representative Edinburgh bodies. Another mid-season activity was an Exhibition on Film Décor in the National Gallery of Scotland. The fourteenth season will open in October with a showing of British and Soviet scientific films, which it is hoped will stimulate the formation of a scientific film society in Edinburgh. The first of the regular winter performances will be given on 17th October, and plans are being made to show the following films during the season: *La Fin du Jour*, *Derrière la Facade*, *My Universities*, *Alexander Nevsky*, *Le Dernier Tourant*, *Burgtheatre*, and *World of Plenty*.

The Guild has acquired new office premises at 21 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2.

Boy Scouts Association Film Library

The heavy strain occasioned by an ever increasing number of bookings has put the majority of our films out of commission, and we have therefore had to close the library temporarily. It is now very difficult to get new copies of films owing to the limited supply of film stock, but because a general licence permitting the making of contact prints (but not reduction or sound prints) has recently been issued, we hope to have replacements of our unserviceable copies made in time for the autumn season.

Scouts have a part in the new Colonial Film Unit's production, *English Wartime Family*. The director of the film was very pleased indeed with these Scout amateur film players.

16mm. SOUND FILMS.

16mm. SILENT COLOUR CARTOONS

8mm. SILENT COLOUR CARTOONS

Splendid Hire Service, with Personal Attention.
Stamp for Lists.

BALMFORTH FILMS,

Rydal Mount, Ruff Lane, Ormskirk.

SILENT TO SOUND!

These booklets show how the handyman can adapt any silent projector for showing Soundfilm Talkies. Fully illustrated. "Practical Sound Conversion For Amateurs," 5/6d. Post Free. "Adapting the 200B to Sound" 3/- Post Free. We supply conversion parts. Fourth revised edition now available from
CINELUXE LIMITED, 88, GREENFIELD AVENUE
CARPENDERS PARK, WATFORD, HERTS.

FILM LIBRARIES

Following Catalogues now available at 9d. each plus 3d. postage. (1st editions 1943)

8mm Film Library. 16mm Sound and Silent Film Library. (Illustrated supplement of sound features 6d. extra) 9.5mm Sound and Silent Film Library.

Over 4,000 films in stock. Additions monthly

J. G. KIRKHAM

SUBSTANDARD FILM SERVICE, WINWICK
ROAD, WARRINGTON :: Phone 245

Travel abroad during school hours, through the medium of the screen.

DENMARK · SWEDEN · INDIA
SWITZERLAND · AFRICA
via

DAVIS SOUND FILM EQUIPMENTS

22 Lynn Road, WISBECH.

Full lists of features, shorts and NEWSREEL on request.

CINE SCREENS

EVERY KIND,
AMATEUR AND
PROFESSIONAL

E. G. TURNER,

43-47 Higham St., Walthamstow, E.17

DAWN TRUST FILM LIBRARY

SOMETHING NEW. SOMETHING IMPRESSIVE. SOMETHING PROFESSIONAL

Religious and Uplift feature films really worth showing. 16 mm.

Our Stars include : Eric Portman, Nova Pilbeam, Michael Redgrave, Emlyn Williams, John Garrick, Hugh Williams, Paul Muni, Kay Francis, Ian Hunter, George Arliss, Fay Compton, James Mason, Flora Robson.

Stars Look Down, The Crypt, Emile Zola, White Angel, Louis Pasteur, Green Pastures, Silent Voice, Pastor Hall, Lily of Killarney, Monastery Garden, Manger to Cross, Men of Yesterday, Immortal Song, Mill on the Floss, Last Adventurers, Scrooge, Sheepdog, John Halifax, Turn of the Tide, Vicar of Bray, Poison Pen.

For discounts write to:

REV. BRIAN HESSON, DAWN TRUST, LTD., AYLESBURY, BUCKS.
AYLESBURY 649.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

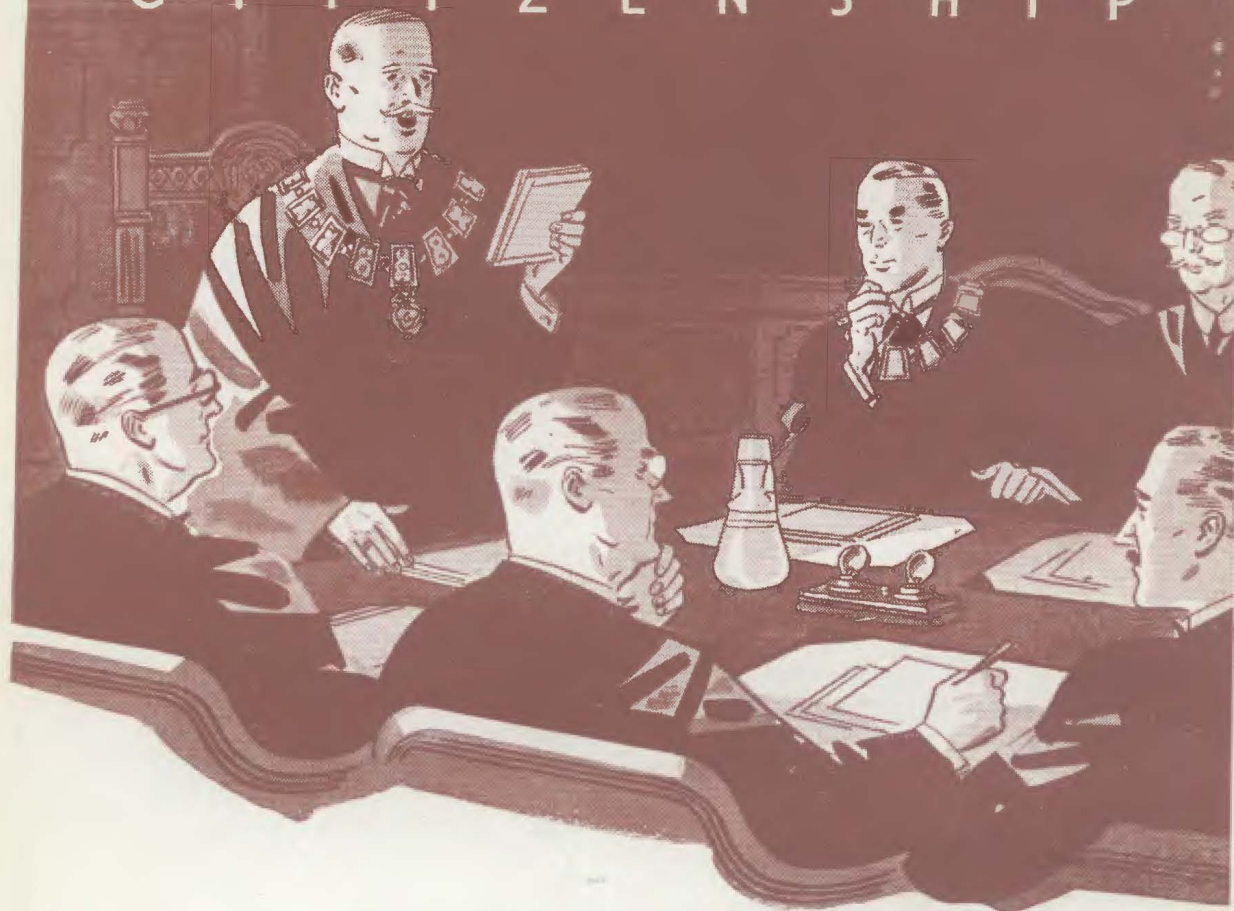
DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London**, in association with **American Film Center, New York**.

Subscription: Six months 3/- (post free), Single copies 6d. each from
DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER · 34 Soho Square, W.1 · Gerrard 4253

Owned and Published by Film Centre Ltd.

Editorial Board: EDGAR ANSTEY · GEOFFREY BELL · ALEXANDER SHAW · DONALD TAYLOR
JOHN TAYLOR · BASIL WRIGHT. *Editor:* MARION GRIERSON

C I T I Z E N S H I P



This has been called a 'peoples's war'—we all know what we are fighting for and what we are fighting against. And we must see to it that when Peace comes it is also a 'people's peace'. We must not repeat previous mistakes. We must learn to share responsibilities of citizenship.

Upon those whose privilege it is to teach and train young people rests a great responsibility and a difficult task. This task can be made less difficult by the generous employment of G.B. Instructional Films. With their help the children can be given an intimate and personal knowledge of the many problems of sociology, economics, citizenship, history, travel and manufacture, which, with their receptive and responsive minds will help to make them conscious of their future responsibilities as good citizens of a worthy country—and of the world.

Gaumont British Instructional Films

Complete Descriptive Catalogue sent on request.

G.B. EQUIPMENTS LTD. 16mm. DEPT., WOODCHESTER, Nr. STROUD, GLOS.